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ABSTRACT

Undergraduate admissions policies and practices at 1,463 institutions were surveyed. The investigation dealt with many aspects of admission, including policy-making authority, application procedures, accessibility and selectivity, student credentials, recruitment, and marketing, guidance and course placement, and differential treatment of various applicant groups. Respondents were asked to provide the requested information in relation to first-time undergraduate candidates who have been educated in the American secondary school tradition, excluding applicants from foreign schools and transfer applicants from other colleges. Public institutions with different policies and practices for in-state (or in-district) and out-of-state (or out-of-district) applicants were asked to describe their policies and practices for the admission of in-state (or in-district) applicants. Respondents also indicated their observations of changing roles, standards, and procedures regarding admissions from 1970 to 1978 and anticipations of change by the mid-1980s. A table summarizing college admissions policies and practices, and a sample questionnaire are included. (SW)

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Undergraduate Admissions: The Realities of Institutional Policies, Practices, and Procedures

A Report on a Survey Conducted by

The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers

and

The College Board

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HE 013 356

College Entrance Examination Board, New York, 1980

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Foreword

The report that follows summarizes a massive effort by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) and the College Board over a period of more than two years. We share it with you at a time when the process by which students are admitted to post-secondary education is being questioned in the courts, in the legislatures, and in the homes of potential students—in the hopes that the data reported here can both clarify the current process and provide a benchmark against which changes in that process can be measured.

An advisory committee of practicing admissions officers, named in the Appendix, guided the development and conduct of the study. Representatives of AACRAO in every state assisted in the collection of the data. Members of the College Board staff, both the survey staff (Stephen H. Ivens, Edmund C. Jacobson, James E. Nelson, and William D. Van Dusen, project director) and the countless others not named who worked on various aspects of the study, are responsible for this report. We wish to acknowledge in particular the work of Douglas D. Dillenbeck, who was responsible for preparing the manuscript. But the 1,463 individual college admissions officers who took the time to complete a very lengthy survey instrument are due our special thanks for a major contribution to the literature of their chosen profession. Without their support, this study could never have been completed.

George H. Hanford
President
The College Board

Introduction

Each year in the United States about 3 million students graduate from high school, and each fall about 2.5 million students enter college for the first time. Coming from approximately 20,000 high schools and from all positions and stages of life (these new college entrants include increasing numbers of older students, long since out of high school), they distribute themselves among some 2,600 colleges, universities, technical institutes, and other college-level institutions. For their part the prospective college students choose from all the available colleges the one or more they most wish to attend, and then they apply for admission. The colleges review applications, decide which applicants to accept, and inform all applicants of their decisions.

To a great extent the entire process is voluntary for both the students and the colleges, without benefit of, or interference from, any centralized regulation or coordination. True, within individual states there is typically some centralized control over the public institutions, but even in these circumstances the transaction between student and college is essentially bilateral and autonomous. The existence of as many as 50 state authorities hardly diminishes the point that in this country the annual student migration from high school to college is an extraordinarily large and complex phenomenon that is reasonably orderly and, for the most part, serves the interests of all parties reasonably well.

While the high school class of 1979 was in its senior year, studying college catalogs and directories, consulting counselors, interviewing admissions officers, and taking entrance examinations, this study of the colleges' part in the admissions process was undertaken. The survey was cosponsored by the College Board and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). A questionnaire was sent to the directors of admission in all regionally accredited, undergraduate, degree-granting institutions of higher education listed in the *1976-77 Education Directory: Colleges and Universities*, published by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), then a division of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Titled "Survey of Undergraduate Admissions Policies, Practices, and Procedures," the questionnaire contains 51 items that deal with many aspects of admission, including policymaking authority, requirements, credentials, recruitment, course placement, and differential treatment of various applicant groups. Respondents were asked to provide the requested information in relation to first-time undergraduate candidates who have been educated in the American secondary school tradition, excluding applicants from foreign schools and transfer applicants from other colleges. Public institutions with different policies and practices for in-state (or in-district) and out-of-state (or out-of-district) applicants were asked to describe their policies and practices for the admission of in-state (or in-district) applicants.

The questionnaire, reproduced in the Appendix, was mailed the first week of 1979 to 2,623 institutions. This report is based on usable responses received by July 1, 1979, from 1,463 institutions, or about 56 percent of the original recipients. Not all colleges responded to all items, but the response rate for most items was so high that the small number of missing or unusable responses should not significantly affect the interpretation of the total response. Tabular summaries of the responses to those items dealing with current policies and procedures are given throughout the text. To the extent feasible, the tables have a common format,

summarizing the response data for the entire group of 1,463 respondents and for each of four subgroups classified by level and control as follows: 401 two-year public colleges, 81 two-year private colleges, 333 four-year public colleges, and 648 four-year private colleges.

Representativeness of the Respondents

Can it be said with confidence that the admissions policies, practices, and procedures of these 56 percent of American undergraduate colleges are typical of all? Are there likely to be major differences between the colleges that returned the questionnaire and those that did not? The answers to such questions cannot be wholly conclusive, but the evidence shows no apparent systematic differences that would distort the kinds of interpretation offered here. The responding group includes 52 percent of all the two-year public institutions, 45 percent of all the two-year private institutions, 63 percent of the four-year public institutions, and 56 percent of the four-year private institutions. Inasmuch as most of the data are presented separately for these four categories, one can take note of the slightly smaller representation of two-year institutions and interpret their responses with suitably greater caution.

The responding colleges reported a total of approximately 1,309,000 enrolled freshmen in the fall of 1978, which is about 54 percent of the 2,442,713 first-time students enrolled that year in United States institutions of higher education, as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics in *Digest of Education Statistics 1979*. Because the NCES data include students enrolled in institutions that are not regionally accredited and therefore not in the survey population, the survey respondents must in fact enroll more than 54 percent of the freshmen in the country's regionally accredited institutions. Inasmuch as the respondents constitute 56 percent of the accredited institutions and enroll something over 54 percent of the entering freshmen, it follows that, on the average, the responding institutions are similar to all the accredited institutions in the size of their freshman enrollments.

Another aspect of representativeness is variety. For example, do the colleges that responded to the survey include the full range of institutional size, so that admissions policies and practices peculiar to very small or to very large institutions are reported here? The respondents include 112 institutions with full-time undergraduate enrollments of 250 or fewer. At the other extreme are 60 respondents with more than 10,000 full-time undergraduates each.

The responding group includes 482 two-year and 981 four-year colleges; 734 public and 729 private colleges; 25 colleges for men and 66 colleges for women; 26 with predominantly black enrollments; 64 with annual tuition charges, if any, below $200 and 15 that charge more than $5,000 a year. Geographically the respondents are distributed among all regions of the country in almost precisely the same proportions as are all the colleges. In sum, by many dimensions of institutional variety, the respondents seem as varied as the universe of all colleges and representative of the total with respect to size, location, control, and other pertinent variables. There seems to be ample reason to believe that their admissions policies, practices, and procedures, too, are typical of those in the whole population of accredited higher institutions.

Applicants, Accepted Applicants, and Enrolled Freshmen

Approximately 1,350 institutions reported they had received a total of almost 2.25 million applications for admission as freshmen in the fall of 1978. They had tendered approximately 1.9 million offers of admission in response to those applications, and in fall 1978 some 1.3 million freshmen had enrolled. The figures illustrate the phenomenon of multiple applications. Although some persons certainly apply for admission to college and then, for a variety of reasons, do not enroll, it is a common observation that they constitute a small proportion of all applicants. For practical purposes it would be reasonable to think of the 1.3 million enrolled freshmen as almost the whole original group of applicants, who, it then follows, filed an average of 1.7 applications each and received an average of 1.4 acceptances. Said another way: From the colleges' point of view it took, on the average, 1.7 applicants and 1.4 acceptances to produce one enrolled freshman. From the applicants' point of view the colleges offered admission in response to 83 percent of their applications, or, all things being equal, there was an 83 percent chance in that year that an application would result in an offer of admission.

The figures are quite different, however, for the colleges that are open to all applicants, or at least to all who have graduated from high school. These so-called open-door colleges, which are discussed further in Chapter 5, offered admission to 96 percent of their applicants for the fall of 1978. Probably because these colleges' admissions requirements are so explicit and because they can accept all applicants who meet those requirements, students who wish to attend them make few applica-

tions to other colleges. In this group of institutions it took only 1.2 applicants and 1.2 acceptances to result in one enrolled freshman.

By contrast, there are the colleges that each year receive applications from larger numbers of qualified applicants than they can or wish to accept, and the filing of multiple applications is far more common among their applicants. In the responding colleges in such circumstances in 1978, it took 3.2 applications and 1.8 acceptances to yield one enrolled freshman. They offered admission, on the average, to 56 percent of their applicants, so applications to these institutions had little better than even chances of resulting in acceptances. In the face of such odds it is sensible for students to apply to more than one college, and they do. In the survey population the group of colleges where admission is competitive comprises just 124 institutions, whereas 429 open-door colleges reported their applicant data. (The terms *competitive* and *open-door* are used in this report for conciseness in referring to groups of colleges with different degrees of accessibility or selectivity. Fuller definitions are given in Chapter 5.) Although there are about 3.5 times as many open-door as competitive institutions, the former had barely twice as many applications as the latter. This disproportion may help to explain why much of the published material on college admissions, in both professional and popular publications, tends to focus on the process as it occurs in that minority of colleges with a surplus of qualified applicants.

Undoubtedly more efficient ways could be devised to direct every prospective college student into an appropriate, or at least adequate, college without all the duplication of effort inherent in multiple applications, multiple acceptances, and occasionally unpredictable attrition between acceptance and enrollment, sometimes leaving some colleges with too many students and others with too few. Most proposals for improvement in efficiency, however, involve some surrender of freedom of choice for either the applicant or the college, and historically there has been little support for increased efficiency at the price of diminished freedom.

The following chapters describe in some detail the existing system, as reported by the 1,463 responding institutions. The report begins with an examination of admissions policies and proceeds to requirements and procedures. Chapter 8 reports changes observed by admissions officers in recent years and changes they anticipate in the next few years.

1. Policies and Requirements

Responsibility for Determination

To begin at the beginning, decisions are made about which students are eligible to go to the various colleges and how they will be chosen. Because many individuals and groups have a voice in these decisions, the survey asked colleges to characterize the roles of those parties most commonly involved. Among all the respondents, the institution's chief executive officer was cited by the largest proportion, 40 percent, as having primary responsibility for the broad guidelines on admissions. The admissions committee was reported to have such responsibility by 36 percent of the respondents, and the admissions staff by 34 percent. (Many respondents named more than one party as having primary responsibility.)

Among the public colleges, however, larger proportions of both two-year and four-year institutions said that their trustees had primary responsibility for broad guidelines, and their chief executive officers ranked second in the numbers of colleges saying they had such primary responsibility. Among the four-year private colleges, both the admissions committee and the admissions staff were cited by more institutions than cited the chief executive officer as having primary responsibility for broad admissions guidelines.

In sum, although the chief executive officer is likely to be significantly involved in determining policy guidelines in all types of institutions, such responsibility is much more likely to be held by trustees of public than of private colleges, and admissions committees of the faculty are more often responsible for guidelines in private than in public institutions. Table 1 gives a detailed summary of the responses on who holds primary responsibility for broad admissions guidelines.

If responsibility for broad admissions guidelines varies among institutional types, primary responsibility for specific policies is consistently attributed to the admissions staff, which was the party named by the largest proportion of the total group of respondents and of each category except two-year private colleges, among which the admissions committee was cited a little more frequently than was the admissions staff. In all categories but one, the three most frequently cited parties were the admissions staff, the chief executive officer, and the admissions committee. Only the two-year public colleges cited the admissions committee less often, instead giving third rank to the executive council, council of deans, or similar administrative group. Table 2 presents a summary of the responses on who holds primary responsibility for specific admissions policies.

In addition to primary responsibility for broad guidelines and specific policies, the other terms by which respondents might characterize the roles of the various individuals or groups were (1) strong influence on guidelines and policies but no direct responsibility, (2) advisory role only, and (3) no involvement. Forty percent of the two-year public colleges reported no involvement by an admissions committee, which must certainly be interpreted to mean that most of these institutions have no admissions committee. On the other hand, that a majority of all categories of institutions reported no involvement by students cannot be interpreted to mean they have no students. The nature and the extent of student involvement in admissions are discussed later in this chapter. Table 3 gives the data on the

TABLE 1. Primary Responsibility for Broad Guidelines on Freshman Admissions

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Admissions committee	No.	528	53	36	94	345
	%	36%	13%	44%	28%	53%
Admissions staff	No.	493	108	26	106	253
	%	34%	27%	32%	32%	39%
Chief executive officer	No.	592	166	39	135	252
	%	40%	41%	48%	41%	39%
Executive council,	No.	372	120	23	70	159
council of deans, etc.	%	25%	30%	28%	21%	25%
Faculty senate	No.	181	20	4	62	95
	%	12%	5%	5%	19%	15%
Individual departments	No.	68	31	4	17	16
	%	5%	8%	5%	5%	2%
Board of trustees,	No.	460	183	15	140	122
governing board	%	31%	46%	19%	42%	19%
Students	No.	28	5	1	4	18
	%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%
State legislature	No.	190	134	2	48	6
	%	13%	33%	2%	14%	1%
State coordinating board	No.	123	86	2	31	4
or "1202" commission	%	8%	21%	2%	9%	1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

Note: Percentages total more than 100 because respondents named more than one party as having primary responsibility.

TABLE 2 Primary Responsibility for Specific Policies on Freshman Admissions

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Admissions committee	No.	509	69	42	97	301
	%	35%	17%	52%	29%	46%
Admissions staff	No.	696	162	39	160	335
	%	48%	40%	48%	48%	52%
Chief executive officer	No.	399	134	24	82	159
	%	27%	33%	30%	25%	25%
Executive council,	No.	293	126	21	56	90
council of deans, etc.	%	20%	31%	26%	17%	14%
Faculty senate	No.	114	13	1	43	57
	%	8%	3%	1%	13%	9%
Individual departments	No.	124	49	7	37	31
	%	8%	12%	9%	11%	5%
Board of trustees,	No.	196	92	3	64	37
governing board	%	13%	23%	4%	19%	6%
Students	No.	15	5	0	0	10
	%	1%	1%			2%
State legislature	No.	57	39	1	16	1
	%	4%	10%	1%	5%	<1%
State coordinating board	No.	48	27	1	20	0
or "1202" commission	%	3%	7%	1%	6%	
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

Note: Percentages total more than 100 because respondents named more than one party as having primary responsibility.

TABLE 3. Admissions Roles and Percentages of Institutions Reporting Those Roles

	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Admissions committee	Broad guidelines (36%)	No involvement (40%)	Specific policies (52%)	Specific policies (29%)	Broad guidelines (53%)
Admissions staff	Specific policies (48%)	Specific policies (40%)	Specific policies (48%)	Specific policies (48%)	Specific policies (52%)
Chief executive officer	Broad guidelines (40%)	Broad guidelines (41%)	Broad guidelines (48%)	Broad guidelines (41%)	Broad guidelines (39%)
Executive council	Strong influence (24%)	Specific policies (31%)	Specific policies; strong influence (26%)	Strong influence (34%)	Strong influence (23%)
Faculty senate	No involvement (39%)	No involvement (46%)	No involvement (54%)	No involvement (28%)	No involvement (39%)
Individual departments	Advisory role (36%)	Advisory role (28%)	Advisory role (37%)	Advisory role (36%)	Advisory role (41%)
Board of trustees	No involvement (32%)	Broad guidelines (46%)	No involvement (41%)	Broad guidelines (42%)	No involvement (40%)
Students	No involvement (55%)	No involvement (57%)	No involvement (70%)	No involvement (54%)	No involvement (52%)
State legislature	No involvement (67%)	No involvement (35%)	No involvement (83%)	No involvement (59%)	No involvement (88%)
State coordinating board	No involvement (69%)	No involvement (44%)	No involvement (79%)	No involvement (50%)	No involvement (88%)

admissions roles reported by the largest proportions of the colleges.

Authority of the Admissions Director

Given that many parties besides the admissions staff may have a voice in determining an institution's guidelines and specific policies governing the admission of freshmen, when it comes down to the individual case—deciding whether or not a particular applicant will be admitted—how much discretion or judgment may the director of admissions exercise? Are the policies and guidelines flexible, or must the director of admissions follow them to the letter? If the director of admissions does not have authority to interpret the guidelines and policies flexibly, may exceptions be made by other officers of the institution?

A majority of all the respondents and all the subgroups reported that the director of admissions has some flexibility within the prescribed guidelines and requirements, and between one-quarter and one-third reported that the director has complete flexibility. Smaller numbers reported smaller degrees of discretion, however, and some institutions in every category reported that neither the director nor any other officer of the institution had any freedom to make exceptions to the rules. Table 4 details the authority of the director of admissions and other officers to interpret institutional admissions policies flexibly in individual cases.

Student Participation in Admissions

One way in which some institutions have been bringing their enrolled students into more active partnership with the faculty and the administration is by involving them in aspects of admissions. Five common kinds of involvement are (1) membership on the admissions policy committee, (2) membership on the admissions appeals committee, (3) service as interviewers of prospective students, (4) service as reviewers of applicants' credentials, and (5) participation in admissions decisions about individual applicants. Colleges were asked to indicate any and all of these ways in which their students were involved.

More four-year than two-year colleges reported student participation in the admissions process. More than one-third of the four-year colleges in the survey said that students serve on their admissions policy committees, which, in approximately half the four-year institutions, have primary responsibility for both the broad guidelines and the specific policies pertaining to freshman admissions. Table 5 summarizes the report of student participation in the admissions process.

TABLE 4. Authority of Admissions Director and Other Institutional Officers to Interpret Admissions Guidelines and Policies

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Complete flexibility	No.	428	105	20	93	210
	%	29%	26%	25%	28%	32%
Some flexibility within prescribed guidelines or requirements	No.	807	204	51	182	370
	%	55%	51%	63%	55%	57%
Only minimal flexibility	No.	97	30	5	26	36
	%	7%	7%	6%	8%	6%
No flexibility, but other offices can make exceptions	No.	43	11	2	18	12
	%	3%	3%	2%	5%	2%
All must adhere rigidly to prescribed guidelines and requirements	No.	56	35	1	13	7
	%	4%	9%	1%	4%	1%
No response	No.	32	16	2	1	13
	%	2%	4%	2%	<1%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 5. Participation by Enrolled Students in Admissions Process

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Serve on admissions policy committee	No.	426	54	7	111	254
	%	29%	14%	9%	33%	39%
Serve on admissions appeal committee	No.	181	34	3	62	82
	%	12%	9%	4%	19%	13%
Interview prospective students	No.	253	20	18	54	161
	%	17%	5%	22%	16%	25%
Review applicants' academic or personal credentials	No.	62	1	1	3	57
	%	4%	<1%	1%	1%	9%
Regularly participate in making admissions decisions	No.	75	4	0	6	65
	%	5%	1%		2%	10%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

2. Student Qualifications

With authority and responsibility for the admissions policy divided as they are among many participants from campus to community to state capital, it will come as no surprise that the policies themselves vary greatly among institutions, both from type to type and from institution to institution within type.

Residence as a Qualification

Some institutions are required, as a matter of public policy or law, to grant admission to all high school graduates of their state or district, sometimes with the additional stipulation that the students must have met some specified standard of previous academic achievement, such as ranking in the upper three-quarters of the class or having a final grade average of C or better. One-fourth of the institutions responding to a question on this point indicated they were governed by such a requirement. Almost, but not quite, all these institutions are publicly controlled, and two-year institutions are considerably more likely than four-year institutions to be operating under such a mandate. Although this survey item referred only to recent high school graduates, it will be shown later that many institutions do not have this requirement or, if they do, waive it for adults under certain conditions. Table 6 summarizes the various institutional policies pertaining to state or district residence.

Residence as an Obstacle

Although residence may ensure an applicant's admission to certain colleges in the same state or district, it may also be a potential obstacle to the same applicant's admission to some colleges in other states and districts. Almost one-fourth of the four-year public colleges in the survey reported there is a limit, either self-imposed or dictated by a higher authority, on the percentage of their freshmen who can come from outside their state or district. Almost no private colleges reported such a limit, and less than 5 percent of the two-year public colleges did so. Table 7 shows the colleges' responses on this point.

Academic Qualifications

The prescription by colleges of certain kinds and amounts of study that students should complete before entering college is a custom apparently honored more by time than by objective evidence of its educational efficacy. Although in earlier times such prescription was customarily expressed in terms of specific bodies of knowledge and skills, such as a given set of theorems in geometry or the ability to read from the New Testament in Greek, in this century there has developed the near-universal practice of stating such requirements as minimum numbers of years of study in certain high school subjects. Although not all colleges publish such requirements or recommendations, many do, and even those that do not are likely to require high school graduation, thereby automatically requiring whatever amounts of study in the various subjects the state and local authorities demand as a condition of graduation from high school.

Colleges that wish to go beyond the minimum requirements for the high school diploma choose from a variety of ways to express their requirements and recommendations. They may simply specify a minimum number of years or units in each of several subjects, such as four years of English, three

TABLE 6. Requirements for Admission of High School Graduates of Same State or District

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Must accept every high school graduate	No.	289	213	3	65	9
	%	20%	53%	4%	19%	1%
Must accept graduates with average of 2.0 (C) or better	No.	25	2	2	18	3
	%	2%	<1%	2%	5%	<1%
Must accept graduates with specified level of achievement higher than 2.0	No.	29	0	0	26	3
	%	2%			8%	1%
Must accept specified percentage of high school class: e.g., all students in upper half	No.	29	0	0	26	3
	%	2%			8%	<1%
No such requirement	No.	1,080	172	73	211	624
	%	74%	43%	90%	63%	96%
No response	No.	26	14	3	2	7
	%	2%	3%	4%	1%	1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 7. Percentage Limits of Freshman from Out of State or District

Percentage Limits		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
1-10	No.	35	11	0	23	1
	%	2%	3%		7%	<1%
11-20	No.	44	2	0	41	1
	%	3%	<1%		12%	<1%
21-30	No.	13	3	0	10	0
	%	1%	1%		3%	
31-50	No.	6	3	0	3	0
	%	<1%	1%		1%	
51-99	No.	4	0	0	2	2
	%	<1%			1%	<1%
No limit or no response	No.	1,361	382	81	254	644
	%	93%	95%	100%	76%	99%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

years of history and social studies, three years of mathematics, and two years of a foreign language. Or they may specify a minimum of twelve units, distributed among the fields of English, history and social studies, foreign languages, mathematics, and science, leaving the details of the distribution to the applicant and the high school. A common pattern combines the two approaches, as in the following example: four units of English, one unit of American history, and twelve additional units chosen from the fields of social studies, science, mathematics, and foreign languages.

Given the almost endless variety of ways that colleges may use to specify high school studies required for admission, any summary of such requirements is necessarily oversimplified. Nevertheless, many institutions responded to the necessarily oversimplified questionnaire item to describe their requirements as well as they could.

The most common and uniform requirement among all categories of colleges is four years of English, which happens also to be the most common requirement for high school graduation set by state and local school systems. Between one-third and one-half of the colleges reported requirements in mathematics, natural sciences, and social studies as well. Least common is required study of a foreign language, reported by 21 percent of the responding institutions.

Four-year private colleges tend to express more

requirements, on the average, than do four-year public colleges; but, as will be seen later, this may be related less to their public and private auspices than to their selectivity in admissions. Table 8 presents a summary of the respondents' admissions requirements of previous study in various subjects.

Colleges' published statements of high school subjects required for admission vary from college to college not only in their contents but also in their interpretation and observance in admissions decisions. Some colleges consider their stated requirements essential preparation for the work that students will take in college; they rarely waive those requirements except, perhaps, when an applicant can show evidence of equivalent preparation by tutoring, independent study, experience, or other means. Tests or examinations may be accepted as evidence of such equivalent preparation.

Other colleges may intend their statements of required preparation as nothing more than advice for how students can best prepare themselves for college work. Still other statements may represent only the colleges' opinions of what well-motivated prospective college students will take in high school if given the opportunity (and thus a means of identifying such well-motivated applicants). Many colleges, of course, publish no statements regarding high school subjects they require or recommend. These include the colleges that, by regulation or by choice, accept all high school graduates and therefore accept the pattern of subjects required for graduation by the states and the local schools. They may also include some highly selective institutions that, while not prescribing a single high school program for their applicants, weigh heavily in their admissions decisions the subjects completed by applicants as well as their achievement in those subjects.

About one-third of all the institutions responding to the survey said they regard their high school subject requirements as rigid and give few, if any, waivers. Fewer than one in six of the two-year public colleges took this position, but about two-fifths of the colleges in the other categories did so. Larger proportions of private than public, and of four-year than two-year, colleges publish statements of high school subject requirements, but this appears to be related more to selectivity or accessibility than to public or private auspices or to program level. Table 9 reports the significance the colleges attach to their published statements of high school subject requirements.

Many colleges in the survey reported they have certain minimum standards of academic qualification below which applicants are generally considered ineligible for admission. These minimum standards may be expressed as high school grade averages, percentile ranks in the high school class, or scores on nationally administered admissions tests. The most common minimum standard was the high school grade average, which was reported by 40 percent of all the survey institutions and by

TABLE 8. Required Years of Study in Various High School Subjects

Subject or Field		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
English	No.	770	66	53	185	466
	%	53%	16%	65%	56%	72%
Mean years of study		3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8
Mathematics	No.	718	53	43	170	452
	%	49%	13%	53%	51%	70%
Mean years of study		2.2	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.3
Physical sciences	No.	521	41	28	119	333
	%	36%	10%	35%	36%	51%
Mean years of study		1.3	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.3
Biological sciences	No.	580	40	37	135	368
	%	40%	10%	46%	41%	57%
Mean years of study		1.2	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.2
Social studies	No.	648	47	43	149	409
	%	44%	12%	53%	45%	63%
Mean years of study		2.1	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.1
Foreign languages	No.	309	8	9	49	243
	%	21%	2%	11%	15%	38%
Mean years of study		2.1	2.5	1.8	2.0	2.1
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 9. Significance of Colleges' Published Statements of High School Subjects Required for Admission

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Published statements are rigid requirements	No.	92	21	10	28	33
	%	6%	5%	12%	8%	5%
Published statements generally considered rigid requirements but waived in limited number of cases	No.	393	43	23	97	230
	%	27%	11%	28%	29%	35%
Published statements are recommendations to enhance students' success at institution	No.	468	75	22	112	259
	%	32%	19%	27%	34%	40%
College does not publish statement of high school subject requirements	No.	444	234	26	85	99
	%	30%	58%	32%	26%	15%
No response	No.	66	28	0	11	27
	%	5%	7%		3%	4%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

the largest proportion of each category of institution, although it should be added that very few two-year public institutions reported any of these kinds of minimum standards. The average of the minimum grade averages reported by all the colleges was 2.0 (understood to be about a C average on a scale ranging from 0, or F, to 4, or A).

Significant proportions of both public and private four-year colleges and of private two-year colleges—ranging from 21 percent to 44 percent—reported minimum standards expressed as the percentile rank in the high school class, the sum of verbal and mathematical scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or the American College Testing Program Assessment (ACT) composite score. The average minimum percentile rank in class reported by all categories of institution was 43. This means that, on the average, an applicant would have to rank as high as, or higher than, 43 percent of his or her high school class to be considered eligible for admission to the 423 institutions that reported such a standard. The average minimum sum of SAT verbal and mathematical scores, reported by 432 institutions, was 740. The average minimum ACT composite score, reported by 355 institutions, was 16.2. It should be kept in mind that the range of SAT verbal plus mathematical scores is from 400 to 1,600 and the ACT range is from 1 to 36; so neither of the average minimum scores reported here is very high on its respective scale.

Note that the minimum standards reported here apply to the general run of applicants and are subject to exceptions, which will be reported later. Note also that a college may have a minimum standard for grade average, class rank, *and* one or more test scores, or it may have a standard for only one or two of them. Moreover, the applicant may be required to satisfy both the minimum grade average and the minimum test score, or satisfying either one of them may suffice. Under these circumstances the summary data on colleges' reported minimum standards can be no more than a general indication of the extent and variety among colleges on this approach to the evaluation of applicants for admission. A summary of the colleges' reported minimum academic qualifications is given in Table 10.

Uses of Admissions Tests

Approximately half the survey respondents require all applicants to submit scores on one of the nationally administered admissions tests, and substantial additional numbers require such tests of some applicants. Colleges were asked to describe their own uses of admissions test scores by choosing from a list of five common uses. About three-fourths of the four-year private colleges, two-thirds of the four-year public and two-year private colleges, and one-third of the two-year public colleges said they routinely review the test scores of all or most applicants in deciding whether or not to admit them and in judging their possible need for special help to succeed academically. About one-eighth of all

TABLE 10. Minimum Academic Standards for Admission

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
High school grade average	No.	578	25	37	142	374
	%	40%	6%	46%	43%	58%
Mean requirement		2.0	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0
High school class rank	No.	423	8	19	110	286
(percentile)	%	29%	2%	23%	33%	44%
Mean requirement		43	39	42	40	44
SAT (V + M scores)	No.	432	16	18	126	272
	%	30%	4%	22%	39%	42%
Mean requirement		740	650	617	740	754
ACT composite score	No.	355	8	17	99	231
	%	24%	2%	21%	30%	36%
Mean requirement		16.2	15.5	14.8	16.2	16.4
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

responding colleges look to test scores for evidence of applicants' strength when other credentials are weak; a similar proportion, although requiring tests, seldom use them in admissions or placement. (Other possible uses not touched on in this item are counseling and institutional research, to name just two.)

More than half the four-year colleges reported using test scores in descriptive profiles of their freshman classes to help prospective applicants decide whether to apply. This use was also reported by more than one-third of the two-year private colleges and about one-sixth of the two-year public colleges. Table 11 details the colleges' reported uses of admissions test scores.

Predicted Student Achievement

Many colleges base their admissions decisions in some degree on their estimates of their applicants' probable academic performance in college. Some seek to identify and admit only those who have an acceptable probability of completing the freshman year successfully. Others, with greater numbers of well-qualified applicants than they can accommodate, try to identify and admit those who are likely to be the most successful, although usually taking into account various other qualifications as well.

The prediction of academic performance is often a clinical judgment, made by the college's admissions staff and based on its observations of how students' qualifications have, in the past, seemed to correlate with achievement. In many colleges, however, such predictions are made more systematically, based on mathematical analyses of the correlation between predictor variables, such as high school grades and admissions test scores, and some criterion of college achievement, such as first-semester or first-year grade point average. Such studies are referred to here as *validity studies* because they typically measure the predictive validity of two or more predictor variables, separately and in the weighted combination that best predicts the criterion for the students in the study. Some colleges may conduct separate validity studies for different applicant populations, such as men and women, to determine for each group the weighted combination of predictors that works best.

One end product of a validity study is a prediction equation, which can be used to estimate each applicant's most probable freshman grade point average. Such estimates, like the predictors used to obtain them and the criterion they attempt to predict, are subject to error and are, therefore, rarely used alone as the basis for admissions decisions. They are, however, demonstrably more accurate than the subjective judgments of most observers, especially when the estimates are based on recent data reflecting current applicant populations and college grading practices.

The survey asked the colleges if they had conducted validity studies and, if so, to indicate the year of their most recent study. Almost half the total group reported having conducted validity studies; substantially higher proportions of the four-year colleges than of the two-year colleges had done so. The average number of elapsed years since the most recent study was 2.3 years, which in most circumstances would seem satisfactorily current as a basis for predictions, if used with appropriate caution. The standard deviation of 2.1 years, however, indicates that more than one-sixth of the colleges (or more than 100) may be using validity data that are more than four years old and may no

TABLE 11. Uses of Admissions Test Scores

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Routinely considered in reaching overall judgment regarding admissibility of practically all freshman applicants	No.	809	46	44	214	505
	%	55%	12%	54%	64%	78%
Reviewed in practically all cases for indications of possible difficulty in college's academic program	No.	918	144	52	223	499
	%	63%	36%	64%	67%	77%
Checked only when other credentials fall below specified level	No.	171	34	12	68	57
	%	12%	9%	15%	20%	9%
Used in freshman class profile to help prospective applicants decide whether to apply	No.	591	58	29	166	338
	%	40%	15%	36%	50%	52%
Required or recommended, but seldom play any part in admission or placement of individual applicants	No.	192	92	14	40	46
	%	13%	23%	17%	12%	7%
Not required and not regularly used	No.	313	207	17	30	59
	%	21%	52%	21%	9%	9%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

longer fit current conditions well enough to warrant their continued use in admissions or guidance. Data used in the selection process should be validated regularly (every three years is a generally acceptable standard). Individual colleges should take into account other evidence of stability or change in the characteristics of their applicants and the grading practices in their institutions. The report on the conduct and recency of validity studies is given in Table 12.

Colleges were also asked whether they compute a predicted grade point average or similar index for their typical freshman applicants and, if so, what use they make of it. About one-third reported they make such computations, and about one-half of that group said they use the predicted grade point averages in arriving at admissions decisions. The other half use them only for guidance.

Although a small proportion of the respondents indicate they set a minimum predicted grade point average below which an applicant will not be considered for admission, the majority of these institutions are four-year public colleges; many of these operate within state systems in which less-qualified freshman applicants are, by law or regulation, directed to the system's two-year institutions, where they may qualify for later entry to the four-year institutions. Colleges that observe such cutoffs based on predicted grade point averages may be minimizing the risks of unjust decisions by setting their minimums low enough to take adequate account of the probable error in their predictions and by providing for appeals or reviews when warranted by other evidence about rejected applicants. Table 13 summarizes the colleges' reported uses of predicted grade point averages.

Personal Qualifications

Many institutions attempt, in one way or another, to assess certain personal qualities in their applicants, taking these into account in judging their probable academic and personal success in the college curriculum and the community. Colleges were asked to state whether each of several personal qualities is often, sometimes, or never an important factor in their admissions decisions.

The fact that motivation or initiative was rated often important by the largest proportions of all four college categories will not surprise experienced admissions officers, who have probably sat through countless professional meetings in which ways to assess motivation were discussed and the appro-

TABLE 12. Conduct and Recency of Validity Studies

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Have conducted validity study	No.	625	86	25	196	318
	%	43%	21%	31%	59%	49%
Conducted study in 1977 or later	No.	442	52	22	145	223
	%	30%	13%	27%	44%	34%
Mean number of years since most recent study		2.3	2.6	1.3	2.0	2.4
Have not conducted validity study	No.	838	315	56	137	330
	%	57%	79%	69%	41%	51%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 13. Uses of Predicted Grade Point Average or Similar Index

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Predicted grade point average or similar index is computed; minimum value must be obtained to be considered for admission	No.	64	4	2	38	20
	%	4%	1%	2%	11%	3%
Predicted grade point average or similar index is computed; it is one factor taken into account in admissions decision	No.	188	3	9	46	130
	%	13%	1%	11%	14%	20%
Predicted grade point average or similar index is computed but is used only for guidance	No.	216	37	16	66	97
	%	15%	9%	20%	20%	15%
No such computation is made	No.	957	342	51	178	386
	%	65%	85%	63%	53%	60%
No response	No.	38	15	3	5	15
	%	3%	4%	4%	2%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

priateness of instituting motivation tests was debated. Beyond the elusiveness of motivation itself as a quantifiable personal characteristic, there are philosophical differences between those who would limit college opportunities to students who are already well motivated and those who consider instilling motivation one of the college's educational responsibilities and challenges. In any case, this quality clearly ranks highest among the respondents that consider personal qualities important in admissions decisions.

More colleges consider other personal qualities sometimes important than consider them often important in their admissions decisions. One interpretation of this may be that although the applicant with a large measure of any of these qualities may be given favorable consideration, and the applicant with a serious deficiency (for example, in good citizenship or moral character) may be disfavored, these factors do not weigh heavily in the admission of most applicants. In the order of frequency with which they were reported either often or sometimes important by the total group of respondents, the qualities are motivation or initiative, special skills or abilities, good citizenship or moral character, leadership capabilities, compatibility with institutional qualities, work experience related to intended field of study, and community or church involvement. Table 14 and Table 15 show how the colleges rated personal qualities.

TABLE 14. Personal Qualities Often Important in Admissions Decisions

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Leadership capabilities	No.	189	3	6	36	144
	%	13%	1%	7%	11%	22%
Community or church involvement	No.	140	1	7	8	124
	%	10%	<1%	9%	2%	19%
Motivation or initiative	No.	470	21	28	70	351
	%	32%	5%	35%	21%	54%
Work experience related to intended field of study	No.	150	19	17	26	88
	%	10%	5%	21%	8%	14%
Compatibility between institutional qualities and individual student needs	No.	246	17	16	26	187
	%	17%	4%	20%	8%	29%
Good citizenship or moral character	No.	312	17	30	32	233
	%	21%	4%	37%	10%	36%
Special skills or abilities	No.	216	18	7	39	152
	%	15%	4%	9%	12%	23%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 15. Personal Qualities Often or Sometimes Important in Admissions Decisions

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Leadership capabilities	No.	727	38	48	142	499
	%	50%	9%	59%	43%	77%
Community or church involvement	No.	619	17	46	92	464
	%	42%	4%	57%	28%	72%
Motivation or initiative	No.	908	76	63	189	580
	%	62%	19%	78%	57%	90%
Work experience related to intended field of study	No.	688	77	44	153	414
	%	47%	19%	54%	46%	64%
Compatibility between institutional qualities and individual student needs	No.	726	47	48	130	491
	%	49%	12%	59%	39%	76%
Good citizenship or moral character	No.	785	73	64	121	527
	%	54%	18%	79%	35%	81%
Special skills or abilities	No.	807	67	50	182	508
	%	55%	17%	62%	55%	78%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

Relative Importance of Various Factors

One of the questions about admissions most often asked by prospective college students and their parents is, "How important are school marks (or test scores, extracurricular activities, special abilities, and so on)?" The survey asked colleges to indicate the relative importance in their admissions decisions of various applicant qualifications or credentials, recognizing that this, too, oversimplifies the common admissions situation, where the decision results from a complex interaction of several factors. Nevertheless, colleges were asked to identify the single most important factor in their admissions decisions, if there was one, and to rate other factors as very important, one among several factors, of minor importance, or of no importance (that is, "we do not consider this").

High school academic performance is the only qualification that a significant percentage of any

college category reported to be the single most important factor, and only 31 percent of all the participating institutions joined in that judgment. On the other hand, much greater proportions of the total group and various categories said that high school performance and some of the other characteristics as well are very important in their decisions, confirming the presumption that colleges' admissions decisions are typically based on several kinds of information about their applicants and that no single piece of information alone dictates the decisions. Table 16 and Table 17 list the numbers and proportions of colleges that identified the various factors.

A more direct answer to the question of how important each characteristic is can be found in the ratings the colleges gave to the factors. How important, for example, is high school academic performance? In response, 449 institutions, or 31 percent of the total group, said it is the single most important factor in their decisions, and another 500, or 34 percent, said it is a very important factor. Among the two-year public colleges, however, many of which admit all high school graduates, only 35 percent said that high school performance is of any importance in their decisions, and 225, or 56 percent, of the 401 respondents in that category said they do not consider performance indicators such as class rank or grade average in reaching admissions decisions. On the other hand, the other three categories tend to give much greater weight to this qualification, and less than 5 percent of any of these groups said they do not consider it in their decisions.

Only 2 percent of all survey institutions answered that aptitude tests are the single most important factor, but an additional 42 percent said they are very important. Only 5 percent of the total group consider achievement tests very important, but 19 percent consider them one of many factors, and another 22 percent consider them of minor importance. High school recommendations are

TABLE 16. Applicant Characteristics and Credentials Considered Single Most Important Factor in Admissions Decisions

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Academic performance in high school (grade average or class rank)	No.	449	41	15	143	250
	%	31%	10%	19%	43%	39%
Aptitude test scores (SAT, ACT, PSAT/NMSQT)	No.	25	5	2	12	6
	%	2%	1%	2%	4%	1%
Achievement test scores	No.	3	1	0	0	2
	%	<1%	<1%			<1%
Recommendation from high school	No.	3	1	1	0	1
	%	<1%	<1%	1%		<1%
Recommendation from church, employer, etc.	No.	4	1	0	0	3
	%	<1%	<1%			<1%
Interview with faculty member, alumnus, staff, student, etc.	No.	11	3	1	0	7
	%	1%	1%	1%		1%
Personal essay or autobiographical statement	No.	7	1	0	1	5
	%	<1%	<1%		<1%	1%
Health statement	No.	9	3	0	1	5
	%	1%	1%		<1%	1%
Applicant's place of residence	No.	10	6	0	4	0
	%	1%	1%		1%	
Portfolio, statement, or audition to document or demonstrate prior work	No.	17	1	0	3	13
	%	1%	<1%		1%	2%
Pattern of high school subjects completed	No.	22	3	1	2	16
	%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Declaration of major	No.	19	6	1	2	10
	%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Ability or inability to pay costs of attendance	No.	8	3	0	0	5
	%	1%	1%			1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 17. Applicant Characteristics and Credentials Considered Single Most Important Factor or Very Important Factor in Admissions Decisions

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Academic performance in high school (grade average or class rank)	No.	949	83	62	259	545
	%	65%	21%	77%	77%	84%
Aptitude test scores (SAT, ACT, PSAT/NMSQT)	No.	639	41	31	210	357
	%	44%	10%	38%	63%	55%
Achievement test scores	No.	75	10	4	14	47
	%	5%	2%	5%	4%	7%
Recommendation from high school	No.	193	6	18	14	155
	%	13%	1%	22%	4%	7%
Recommendation from church, employer, etc.	No.	101	3	12	1	85
	%	7%	1%	15%	<1%	13%
Interview with faculty member, alumnus, staff, student, etc.	No.	215	22	22	19	152
	%	15%	5%	27%	6%	23%
Personal essay or autobiographical statement	No.	98	2	3	9	84
	%	7%	<1%	4%	3%	13%
Health statement	No.	87	16	11	16	44
	%	6%	4%	14%	5%	7%
Applicant's place of residence	No.	54	31	0	19	4
	%	4%	8%		6%	1%
Portfolio, statement, or audition to document or demonstrate prior work	No	75	7	3	21	44
	%	5%	2%	4%	6%	7%
Pattern of high school subjects completed	No.	380	33	17	83	247
	%	26%	8%	21%	25%	38%
Declaration of major	No.	126	41	9	31	45
	%	9%	10%	11%	9%	7%
Ability or inability to pay attendance costs	No.	54	17	7	4	26
	%	4%	4%	9%	1%	4%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

considered very important by 13 percent of the total group but by 24 percent of the four-year private colleges and only 4 percent of the four-year public colleges, with a similar disparity between the private and the public two-year colleges of 22 percent and 1 percent, respectively. Recommendations from church, employer, community agency, and the like are very important to just 7 percent of the respondents, while 21 percent consider them one of several factors and another 32 percent find them of minor importance. The pattern of subjects completed by an applicant in high school is the single most important factor to 2 percent of the total group and very important to 24 percent. See Tables 18 through 30, which begin on the following page, for details on the importance ascribed to each itemized qualification and credential as a factor in the admissions decision.

TABLE 18. Importance of High School Academic Performance (Grade Average or Class Rank)

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	449	41	15	143	250
	%	31%	10%	19%	43%	39%
Very important factor	No.	500	42	47	116	295
	%	34%	10%	58%	35%	46%
One of several factors	No.	170	46	13	37	74
	%	12%	11%	16%	11%	11%
Minor factor	No.	32	17	0	4	11
	%	2%	4%		1%	2%
Not considered	No.	269	225	3	29	12
	%	18%	56%	4%	9%	2%
No response	No.	43	30	3	4	6
	%	3%	7%	4%	1%	1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 19. Importance of Aptitude Test Scores such as SAT, ACT, or PSAT/NMSQT

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	25	5	2	12	6
	%	2%	1%	2%	4%	1%
Very important factor	No.	614	36	29	198	351
	%	42%	9%	36%	59%	54%
One of several factors	No.	393	59	29	77	228
	%	27%	15%	36%	23%	35%
Minor factor	No.	78	25	11	14	28
	%	5%	6%	14%	4%	4%
Not considered	No.	304	245	7	25	27
	%	21%	61%	9%	8%	4%
No response	No.	49	31	3	7	8
	%	3%	8%	4%	2%	1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 20. Importance of Achievement Test Scores such as College Board Advanced Placement Examinations and College Board Achievement Tests

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	3	1	0	0	2
	%	<1%	<1%			<1%
Very important factor	No.	72	9	4	14	45
	%	5%	2%	5%	4%	7%
One of several factors	No.	280	24	16	61	179
	%	19%	6%	20%	18%	28%
Minor factor	No.	321	35	19	74	193
	%	22%	9%	23%	22%	30%
Not considered	No.	720	295	37	173	215
	%	49%	74%	46%	52%	33%
No response	No.	67	37	5	11	14
	%	5%	9%	6%	3%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 21. Importance of High School Recommendation

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	3	1	1	0	1
	%	<1%	<1%	1%		<1%
Very important factor	No.	190	5	17	14	154
	%	13%	1%	21%	4%	24%
One of several factors	No.	509	44	36	100	329
	%	35%	11%	44%	30%	51%
Minor factor	No.	275	42	11	110	112
	%	19%	10%	14%	33%	17%
Not considered	No.	435	277	13	100	45
	%	30%	69%	16%	30%	7%
No response	No.	51	32	3	9	7
	%	3%	8%	4%	3%	1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 22. Importance of Recommendations from Church, Employer, Community Agency, etc.

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	4	1	0	0	3
	%	<1%	<1%			<1%
Very important factor	No.	97	2	12	1	82
	%	7%	<1%	15%	<1%	13%
One of several factors	No.	307	22	24	44	217
	%	21%	5%	30%	13%	33%
Minor factor	No.	472	49	25	127	271
	%	32%	12%	31%	38%	42%
Not considered	No.	529	294	16	150	69
	%	36%	73%	20%	45%	11%
No response	No.	54	33	4	11	6
	%	4%	8%	5%	3%	1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 23. Importance of Interviews with Faculty Members, Alumni, Admissions Staff, Enrolled Students, etc.

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	11	3	1	0	7
	%	1%	1%	1%		1%
Very important factor	No.	204	19	21	19	145
	%	14%	5%	26%	6%	22%
One of several factors	No.	498	56	30	95	317
	%	34%	14%	37%	29%	49%
Minor factor	No.	241	27	14	80	120
	%	16%	7%	17%	24%	19%
Not considered	No.	456	264	12	129	51
	%	31%	66%	15%	39%	8%
No response	No.	53	32	3	10	8
	%	4%	8%	4%	3%	1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 24. Importance of Personal Essay or Autobiographical Statement

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	7	1	0	1	5
	%	<1%	<1%		<1%	1%
Very important factor	No.	91	1	3	8	79
	%	6%	<1%	4%	2%	12%
One of several factors	No.	300	12	14	58	216
	%	21%	3%	17%	17%	33%
Minor factor	No.	259	35	17	66	141
	%	18%	9%	21%	20%	22%
Not considered	No.	751	320	44	191	196
	%	51%	80%	54%	57%	30%
No response	No.	55	32	3	9	11
	%	4%	8%	4%	3%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 25. Importance of Health Statement

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	9	3	0	1	5
	%	1%	1%		<1%	1%
Very important factor	No.	78	13	11	15	39
	%	5%	3%	14%	5%	6%
One of several factors	No.	197	52	22	23	100
	%	13%	13%	27%	7%	15%
Minor factor	No.	213	39	17	43	114
	%	15%	10%	21%	13%	18%
Not considered	No.	906	262	27	240	377
	%	62%	65%	33%	72%	58%
No response	No.	60	32	4	11	13
	%	4%	8%	5%	3%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 26. Importance of Geographic Location of Applicant's Residence

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	10	6	0	4	0
	%	1%	1%		1%	
Very important factor	No.	44	25	0	15	4
	%	3%	6%		5%	1%
One of several factors	No.	111	27	4	43	37
	%	8%	7%	5%	13%	6%
Minor factor	No.	187	33	9	41	104
	%	13%	8%	11%	12%	16%
Not considered	No.	1,053	278	64	220	491
	%	72%	69%	79%	66%	76%
No response	No.	58	32	4	10	12
	%	4%	8%	5%	3%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 27. Importance of Portfolios, Statements, or Auditions to Document or Demonstrate Prior Work or Other Notable Accomplishments

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	17	1	0	3	13
	%	1%	<1%		1%	2%
Very important factor	No.	58	6	3	18	31
	%	4%	1%	4%	5%	5%
One of several factors	No.	286	19	12	61	194
	%	20%	5%	15%	18%	30%
Minor factor	No.	297	27	19	82	169
	%	20%	7%	23%	25%	26%
Not considered	No.	740	313	43	159	225
	%	51%	78%	53%	48%	35%
No response	No.	65	35	4	10	16
	%	4%	9%	5%	3%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 28. Importance of Pattern of High School Subjects Completed

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	22	3	1	2	16
	%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Very important factor	No.	358	30	16	81	231
	%	24%	7%	20%	24%	36%
One of several factors	No.	455	45	39	97	274
	%	31%	11%	48%	29%	42%
Minor factor	No.	126	23	9	44	50
	%	9%	6%	11%	13%	8%
Not considered	No.	443	268	12	98	65
	%	30%	67%	15%	29%	10%
No response	No.	59	32	4	11	12
	%	4%	8%	5%	3%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 29. Importance of Applicant's Declaration of Major

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	19	6	1	2	10
	%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Very important factor	No.	107	35	8	29	35
	%	7%	9%	10%	9%	5%
One of several factors	No.	221	33	11	56	121
	%	15%	8%	14%	17%	19%
Minor factor	No.	269	23	16	70	160
	%	18%	6%	20%	21%	25%
Not considered	No.	785	271	41	165	308
	%	54%	68%	51%	50%	48%
No response	No.	62	33	4	11	14
	%	4%	8%	5%	3%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 30. Importance of Applicant's Ability or Inability to Pay Attendance Costs

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Single most important factor	No.	8	3	0	0	5
	%	1%	1%			1%
Very important factor	No.	46	14	7	4	21
	%	3%	3%	9%	1%	3%
One of several factors	No.	105	34	7	14	50
	%	7%	8%	9%	4%	8%
Minor factor	No.	135	29	13	16	77
	%	9%	7%	16%	5%	12%
Not considered	No.	1,108	290	49	289	480
	%	76%	72%	60%	87%	74%
No response	No.	61	31	5	10	15
	%	4%	8%	6%	3%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

3. Application Procedures

Required Credentials

Given the variety of admissions policies and requirements, it is clear that no standard application procedure could serve all the colleges nor would all colleges require, or be satisfied with, a standard package of applicant credentials. The survey asked colleges to identify, from a list of nine credentials, those they require from all applicants and those they require from some applicants.

Consistent with information reported earlier on the importance colleges attach to high school performance, the high school transcript or record of such performance is the most commonly required credential. Almost as frequently required is evidence of the applicant's graduation from high school.

There are large differences between the numbers of colleges requiring certain credentials from all applicants and the numbers requiring the same credentials from some applicants. Some colleges, for example, may offer admission without further documentation to all applicants ranking in the highest quarter of their high school class or to all having a prescribed grade average or higher, but may require certain admissions tests, interviews, or other credentials from other applicants. Some institutions may require only the high school transcript from applicants within the state but additional credentials from out-of-state applicants. Still others may require only the high school transcript for admission to most of their programs but may require, in addition, an audition for admission to their music program or a portfolio from applicants to their art program.

Admissions test scores, such as ACT or SAT, are required from all applicants by 48 percent of the total group of respondents, and an additional 22 percent require the tests of some applicants. Significantly larger proportions of four-year than two-year institutions require the tests.

Letters of recommendation, on the other hand, are far more likely to be required of all applicants by private colleges—46 percent of the four-year and 40 percent of the two-year—than by public colleges—5 percent of the four-year and 1 percent of the two-year.

The personal or autobiographical essay is required of all applicants by 260, or 18 percent, of the total group of respondents, but 218, or 84 percent, of them are four-year private institutions.

The health statement is required from all applicants by 46 percent of all the respondents, but in many of these institutions this credential is required only from accepted applicants and is not a factor in the admissions decision. Table 31 and Table 32 show the numbers and proportions of colleges requiring each of the itemized credentials.

Notification of College's Decision

The question of when an applicant can expect to be accepted for admission, even tentatively, can be of great concern because it may affect other decisions the applicant must make, such as whether to apply to additional colleges to be sure of admission somewhere. The question is unimportant if the applicant's first choice of college is one whose admissions decisions are virtually automatic and require only that the applicant meet the college's stated qualifications, such as graduation from high school and residence within the state or college district. Where colleges' decisions are less

TABLE 31. Credentials Required of All Applicants

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Complete high school transcript	No.	1,082	186	69	256	571
	%	74%	46%	85%	77%	88%
Evidence of high school graduation or equivalent (i.e., GED)	No.	1,037	191	67	267	512
	%	71%	48%	83%	80%	79%
Admissions test scores (e.g., ACT or SAT)	No.	704	46	33	204	421
	%	48%	11%	41%	61%	65%
Achievement test scores	No.	79	3	3	10	63
	%	5%	1%	4%	3%	10%
Letters of recommendation	No.	349	4	32	17	296
	%	24%	1%	40%	5%	46%
Interviews with admissions staff, faculty, alumni, etc.	No.	86	22	12	3	49
	%	6%	5%	15%	1%	8%
Personal essay or autobiographical statement	No.	260	6	9	27	218
	%	18%	1%	11%	8%	34%
Health statement	No.	669	109	53	156	351
	%	46%	27%	65%	47%	54%
Portfolio, statement, or audition to document or demonstrate prior work	No.	54	3	5	7	39
	%	4%	1%	6%	2%	6%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 32. Credentials Required of All or Some Applicants

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Complete high school transcript	No.	1,330	323	75	317	615
	%	91%	81%	93%	95%	95%
Evidence of high school graduation or equivalent (i.e., GED)	No.	1,290	325	75	316	574
	%	88%	81%	93%	95%	89%
Admissions test scores (e.g., ACT or SAT)	No.	1,026	128	52	300	546
	%	70%	32%	64%	90%	84%
Achievement test scores	No.	166	22	7	39	98
	%	11%	5%	9%	12%	15%
Letters of recommendation	No.	577	70	40	80	387
	%	39%	17%	49%	24%	60%
Interviews with admissions staff, faculty, alumni, etc.	No.	473	148	32	97	196
	%	32%	37%	40%	29%	30%
Personal essay or autobiographical statement	No.	364	35	12	57	260
	%	25%	9%	15%	17%	40%
Health statement	No.	850	224	60	181	385
	%	58%	56%	74%	54%	59%
Portfolio, statement, or audition to document or demonstrate prior work	No.	339	63	15	94	167
	%	23%	16%	19%	28%	26%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

predictable, however, applicants are understandably concerned with the timing of those decisions and the opportunity or the need to pursue alternative plans.

Colleges, it should be noted, may experience conflicting pressures to make their initial admissions decisions both early and late. Many are reluctant to make preliminary decisions they will later

wish to reverse when more information about applicants becomes available. For example, the applicant who looks very promising on the basis of ninth- and tenth-grade marks may turn to other interests in the high school junior year and look far less admissible to the college when the marks for that year are reported. Indeed, observers have noted that some students, after receiving notice of admission to college, relax their efforts so markedly and in such numbers as to produce the phenomenon known among school and college personnel as "senior slump." Colleges may, therefore, wish to withhold their acceptances as long as is reasonable in order to keep the pressure on their applicants to maintain their efforts in school.

A conflicting pressure felt by many colleges, especially in times of declining enrollments, is to accept apparently qualified applicants as early as possible and to get them committed to enroll—perhaps with a first payment on their fees—before they change their minds or are exposed to the recruitment efforts of competing colleges. There are undoubtedly other, and possibly more important, reasons than those mentioned here for both early and late acceptances, but these may illustrate the dynamics of the question.

Colleges were asked in the survey to state the number of high school semesters, beginning with the ninth grade, that typical applicants must complete for the institutions to make initial admissions decisions. The most common requirement among all categories except the two-year public colleges is six semesters. Most two-year public colleges found the question inapplicable, almost certainly because their admissions requirements are so specific and objective that neither the colleges nor the prospective students need preliminary decisions to aid their planning. Table 33 summarizes the colleges' responses to this question.

Asked whether they typically require a transcript of applicants' eighth semester of high school work to confirm earlier offers of admission, 1,021 institutions said they do, and 10 others said they typically require the eighth-semester transcript before making the admissions decision. Together these constitute about 70 percent of all the survey respondents and almost the same number that require a complete transcript from all applicants, as reported in Table 31.

Use of Student-Reported Grades

For many years some colleges have asked students to report their own high school grades on the application form, and students often ask how these are used by the colleges. When the survey asked the colleges for the answer, 174 institutions, or 12 percent of the total respondent group, reported that they use student-reported grades in making preliminary admissions decisions but require an official transcript as well. Only 10 institutions reported that they rely on student-reported grades and typically do not require an official transcript from the school. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents reported that they do not use grades reported by the applicants themselves, including about 85 percent of all the private colleges, 78 percent of the four-year public colleges, and 65 percent of the two-year public colleges. Table 34 shows how the colleges use student-reported grades.

School-Reported Grade Averages and Class Ranks

In view of the importance that colleges attach to such summary evidence of applicants' high school academic achievement as their grade averages and

TABLE 33. Number of High School Semesters (Grades 9-12) that Must Be Completed for Initial Admissions Decision

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Five semesters	No.	34	3	3	11	17
	%	2%	1%	4%	3%	3%
Six semesters	No.	757	80	43	206	428
	%	52%	20%	53%	62%	66%
Seven semesters	No.	241	44	16	64	117
	%	16%	11%	20%	19%	18%
Eight semesters	No.	69	25	7	17	20
	%	5%	6%	9%	5%	3%
Not applicable or no response	No.	362	249	12	35	66
	%	25%	62%	15%	11%	10%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 34. Use of Student-Reported High School Grades

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Preliminary decision based on student-reported grades, but official transcript required	No.	174	36	10	43	85
	%	12%	9%	12%	13%	13%
Rely on student-reported grades in most cases, and typically do not require official transcript	No.	10	3	1	5	1
	%	1%	1%	1%	2%	<1%
Student-reported grades not used	No.	1,137	259	69	261	548
	%	78%	65%	85%	78%	85%
Do not require or review high school grades	No.	130	96	1	23	10
	%	9%	24%	1%	7%	2%
No response	No.	12	7	0	1	4
	%	1%	2%		<1%	1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

rank in graduating classes, the survey sought further information about this kind of data. First, it asked the extent to which the transcripts received from high schools contain grade averages and class ranks. The average response from all the responding colleges indicated that about three-fourths of the high school transcripts contain each of these statistics, and this proportion was approximately the same for all types of institutions.

The survey then asked whether colleges use the grade averages reported by high schools or recalculate them for their own purposes. About three-fourths of the 1,035 colleges that reported using grade averages said either that they use those received from the schools or that they recalculate them only to verify their mathematical accuracy. The remaining fourth said that they recalculate the averages to give additional weight to certain courses or to exclude certain courses from the calculation.

Lacking information about the achievement of the applicant's classmates, colleges are not able, of course, to recalculate an applicant's class rank. Such ranks are typically based on the same grade averages as are reported to colleges, however, and the survey asked colleges about their preferences for the method of calculating an applicant's grade average and class rank. Remarkably, the responses from the total group of colleges were divided quite evenly among the five response options: 17 percent opted for basing rank on marks earned in all courses completed; 14 percent preferred including only academic courses; 13 percent preferred including all courses completed, with additional weighting for marks earned in honors and advanced placement courses; 20 percent preferred that rank be based on only academic courses; and 15 percent expressed no preference. The parallel question on grade averages, not surprisingly, elicited similar responses. Table 35 and Table 36 record the colleges' preferences regarding the calculations.

Selection Among Qualified Applicants

Although a majority of the institutions in the survey reported they are able to accommodate all applicants who meet their minimum standards for admission, a sizable minority must make some selection from their pools of qualified applicants. The survey asked them how they do this.

About two-thirds of those that must make a selection said they do so on the basis of first-come, first-served, typically accepting qualified applicants as soon as their applications and other required credentials are received until enough applicants have been accepted to ensure a full class. This is the prevailing procedure for all types of institutions, although markedly less popular among the four-year public colleges, which, in almost equal numbers, said they base their selection on a ranking of applicants according to an evaluation of their qualifications. Only 3 percent of all the institutions that make selections do so by random means. Table 37 summarizes the reported selection methods.

Appeals Procedures

The final question regarding admissions procedures dealt with the possibility of appeals by applicants who had been rejected. Although 526 institutions reported they have formal appeals procedures,

TABLE 35. Preferred Basis for Computation of High School Class Rank

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
All subjects completed	No.	244	47	25	71	101
	%	17%	12%	31%	21%	16%
Academic subjects only	No.	205	25	17	49	114
	%	14%	6%	21%	15%	18%
All subjects, with extra weight given to honors and advanced placement courses	No.	194	21	14	54	105
	%	13%	5%	17%	16%	16%
Academic subjects only, with extra weight given to honors and advanced placement courses	No.	296	13	11	56	216
	%	20%	3%	14%	17%	33%
No preference	No.	222	103	4	47	68
	%	15%	26%	5%	14%	10%
No response	No.	302	192	10	56	44
	%	21%	48%	12%	17%	7%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 36. Preferred Basis for Computation of High School Grade Average

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
All subjects completed	No.	244	58	22	75	89
	%	17%	14%	27%	23%	14%
Academic subjects only	No.	255	29	20	55	151
	%	17%	7%	25%	17%	23%
All subjects, with extra weight given to honors and advanced placement courses	No.	160	16	15	49	80
	%	11%	4%	19%	15%	12%
Academic subjects only, with extra weight given to honors and advanced placement courses	No.	284	15	14	53	202
	%	19%	4%	17%	16%	31%
No preference	No.	199	97	4	36	62
	%	14%	24%	5%	11%	10%
No response	No.	321	186	6	65	64
	%	22%	46%	7%	20%	10%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

fewer than half of them inform rejected applicants about these procedures routinely, choosing instead to inform only those who inquire about them. Another 605 institutions reported they do not have formal appeals procedures but review individual admissions decisions on request. Finally, 283 institutions, or 19 percent of the respondents, said they have no procedure for appeal or review of admissions decisions; but most of this group are two-year public colleges, where the decisions are least likely to be judgmental or, by regulation, reversible. Table 38 reports the colleges' appeals procedures.

TABLE 37. Method of Selection for Admission Among Qualified Applicants

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
All who meet minimum standards are accepted as applications are received, on basis of first-come, first-served, until all places have been filled	No.	378	102	30	62	184
	%	26%	25%	37%	19%	28%
Applicants are evaluated individually to establish rank order, and admission is offered in that order until all places have been filled	No.	185	9	3	59	114
	%	13%	2%	4%	18%	18%
Random selection from among all qualified applicants until all places have been filled	No.	15	2	2	2	9
	%	1%	<1%	2%	1%	1%
All who meet minimum standards can be accommodated	No.	813	258	41	201	313
	%	56%	64%	51%	60%	48%
No response	No.	72	30	5	9	28
	%	5%	7%	6%	3%	4%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 38. Appeals Procedures for Rejected Applicants

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Have a formal appeals procedure and inform rejected applicants about it routinely	No.	217	65	12	77	63
	%	15%	16%	15%	23%	10%
Have a formal appeals procedure but inform rejected applicants about it only when they inquire	No.	309	56	15	108	130
	%	21%	14%	19%	32%	20%
Do not have a formal procedure but review individual decisions on request	No.	605	87	40	120	358
	%	41%	22%	49%	36%	55%
Do not have such a procedure	No.	283	157	12	24	90
	%	19%	39%	15%	7%	14%
No response	No.	49	36	2	4	7
	%	3%	9%	2%	1%	1%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

4. Exceptions to the Rules

Differences in admissions policies and practices exist not only from one institution to another but also within institutions. Many of the survey colleges reported ways in which their requirements or standards are modified for certain groups of applicants or in certain circumstances.

More Selective and Less Selective Programs

One survey item acknowledged that an institution may have certain programs or departments that are more selective than the institution as a whole is in the admission of freshmen. It asked such institutions to report the numbers of applicants to such programs or departments. It also asked for the numbers of applicants to programs or departments that are less selective than is the institution as a whole.

Of all institutions, 538 reported applicants to their more selective programs or departments, and 193 reported applicants to less selective ones. Colleges not reporting such applicants were considered to be about equally selective in all their programs and departments. The reported numbers of applicants to more selective and less selective programs at the responding institutions were 258,052 and 188,267, respectively. Table 39 and Table 40 record the colleges' responses.

Easier Admission for Certain Groups

Colleges were also asked if applicants from various groups might be offered admission even though their grade averages, class ranks, or admissions test scores were significantly lower than those of other applicants. The question referred specifically to each of eight subpopulations of applicants. Racial or ethnic minority groups and disadvantaged students were the two subpopulations to whose members the greatest percentage of all the respondents—37 percent—said they might offer admission under these conditions. A slightly smaller percentage said they might offer admission to adult students with relatively low grade average, class rank, or test scores. Some differences are found among the four institutional types. Almost twice as large a proportion of four-year as of two-year colleges said they may admit lower achieving applicants from the ranks of racial or ethnic minorities and disadvantaged students. Similarly, about twice as high a proportion of public as of private institutions offer admission to lower achieving athletes. Four-year private institutions are more likely than any other category to make concessions both to faculty relatives and to alumni relatives, and four-year public institutions lead the other types in accepting senior citizens with lower school marks or test scores. Table 41 lists the exceptions for certain groups, as reported by the colleges.

Exceptions for Individuals

When the survey asked which of certain groups are eligible for admission as exceptions to the formal admissions requirements, the largest number of colleges (560) reported making exceptions for adult students; the smallest number (329) said they made exceptions for athletes. Colleges were asked also to estimate what percentage of all their exceptions in 1978 could have been granted to each of the eight itemized groups. The median percentage reported by colleges that had granted exceptions to adult students was 10 percent, meaning that

TABLE 39. Applicants for Admission to Programs or Departments that Are More Selective than Institution's General Admissions Practices

	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Institutions reporting such applicants	538	240	22	152	124
Mean number of such applicants reported	480	334	248	729	497
Approximate total number of applicants to more selective programs or departments in these institutions	258,052	80,160	5,456	110,808	61,628

TABLE 40. Applicants for Admission to Programs or Departments that Are Less Selective than Institution's General Admissions Practices

	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Institutions reporting such applicants	193	72	9	53	59
Mean number of such applicants reported	976	1,248	212	1,213	546
Approximate total number of applicants to less selective programs or departments in these institutions	188,267	89,856	1,908	64,289	32,214

TABLE 41. Admission Offers to Less Qualified Applicants from Specific Groups

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Athletes	No.	350	91	8	123	128
	%	24%	23%	10%	37%	20%
Alumni relatives	No.	357	90	17	63	187
	%	24%	22%	21%	19%	29%
Faculty relatives	No.	394	92	18	65	219
	%	27%	23%	22%	20%	34%
Members of racial or ethnic minorities	No.	544	103	20	153	268
	%	37%	26%	25%	46%	41%
Disadvantaged students as distinct from members of racial or ethnic minorities	No.	536	113	17	162	244
	%	37%	28%	21%	49%	38%
Physically handicapped persons	No.	364	112	13	101	138
	%	25%	28%	16%	30%	21%
Students with special talents in such areas as art and music	No.	394	92	15	115	172
	%	27%	23%	19%	35%	27%
Adult students	No.	494	127	26	139	202
	%	34%	32%	32%	42%	31%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

half the colleges could have granted more than 10 percent of all their exceptions to adult students and half could have granted 10 percent or less to that group.

Racial or ethnic minorities were next in the proportion of institutions granting them exceptions to their formal admissions requirements. It was reported by 480 institutions that they do so, and the median percentage reported was 23 percent.

The other student groups for which such data were reported, in the order of the number of institutions that said they grant them exceptions, were

TABLE 42. Exceptions to Formal Admissions Requirements

	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Athletes					
Institutions reporting that exceptions are granted for this group	329	34	12	129	154
Institutions reporting percentages of all exceptions that could have been granted for this group in 1978	220	12	8	100	100
Median percentage reported	14%	15%	18%	15%	12%
Alumni relatives					
Institutions reporting that exceptions are granted for this group	338	33	20	77	208
Institutions reporting percentages	196	9	11	49	127
Median percentage reported	18%	18%	40%	3%	15%
Faculty relatives					
Institutions reporting that exceptions are granted for this group	363	35	20	83	225
Institutions reporting percentages	201	10	11	51	129
Median percentage reported	3%	18%	20%	4%	2%
Members of racial or ethnic minorities					
Institutions reporting that exceptions are granted for this group	480	56	21	149	254
Institutions reporting percentages	331	29	15	111	176
Median percentage reported	23%	24%	28%	21%	23%
Disadvantaged students					
Institutions reporting that exceptions are granted for this group	477	68	17	155	237
Institutions reporting percentages	313	36	9	117	151
Median percentage reported	13%	26%	17%	13%	15%
Physically handicapped persons					
Institutions reporting that exceptions are granted for this group	386	63	19	121	183
Institutions reporting percentages	215	34	6	84	91
Median percentage reported	3%	16%	15%	4%	3%
Students with special talents in such areas as art and music					
Institutions reporting that exceptions are granted for this group	369	39	15	129	186
Institutions reporting percentages	221	11	9	94	107
Median percentage reported	<1%	2%	15%	2%	18%
Adult students					
Institutions reporting that exceptions are granted for this group	490	78	33	170	279
Institutions reporting percentages	354	45	19	121	169
Median percentage reported	10%	45%	25%	12%	12%

disadvantaged students, physically handicapped students, students talented in such areas as art and music, relatives of faculty members, relatives of alumni, and athletes. Table 42 shows the numbers of institutions granting exceptions to various groups and the percentages of all their exceptions each group can get.

Admission after Third Year of High School

As reported earlier, more than half the survey colleges reported that only six semesters of high school (beginning with the ninth grade) must be completed before they will make an initial admissions decision about an applicant, and this was true of

TABLE 43. Admission of Entering Freshmen at End of High School Junior Year

	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Admitted and enrolled as regular students and permitted to take a full program of college work without completing the senior year of high school					
Number of institutions	560	76	26	139	319
Mean number of students so admitted in 1978	80	127	82	83	67
Total number of students so admitted in 1978 to these institutions	44,694	9,652	2,132	11,537	21,373
Admitted and permitted to take some college-level credits before completing their senior year of high school					
Number of institutions	656	248	28	192	188
Mean number of students so admitted in 1978	259	426	95	230	95
Total number of students so admitted in 1978 to these institutions	170,328	105,648	2,660	44,160	17,860
Admitted but not permitted to register for college credits until graduated from high school					
Number of institutions	103	28	4	17	54
Mean number of students so admitted in 1978	853	767	688	1,714	639
Total number of students so admitted in 1978 to these institutions	87,872	21,476	2,752	29,138	34,506

almost two-thirds of the four-year colleges. Because some institutions go further than making initial or tentative decisions, another survey item dealt with early admission and enrollment. Colleges were asked to indicate the numbers of their entering freshmen in 1978 (if any) who had been admitted and enrolled as regular students at the end of their high school junior year, the numbers who had been permitted to take some college work before completing their high school senior year, and the numbers who had been admitted after their junior year but were not permitted to register for college credits before completing high school.

Some colleges apparently admitted freshmen under more than one of these plans, reporting numbers under two or all three response options. Because the survey item requested actual numbers of students rather than an expression of college policy, some colleges may have had difficulty retrieving the requested information and simply omitted any response, resulting in an underestimate of the extent of early admission in the survey colleges. Nevertheless, there were a reported 44,688 entering freshmen enrolled in full college programs without completing their high school year, and another 170,166 enrolled in partial college programs while completing their senior year. Table 43 reports the colleges' early admissions practices in 1978.

Special Provision for Older Applicants

At the other end of the spectrum from high school juniors are older applicants, who have attained a certain age or were graduated from high school a certain number of years ago. Colleges were asked to state the age, if any, and the number of years since high school graduation, if any, at which an applicant would no longer be required to meet certain of their regular admissions requirements.

Of the 1,358 institutions that said they require high school graduation or its equivalent, only 263, or 19 percent, said they would waive this requirement for applicants at or above a certain age, specifying, on the average, the age of 26 years. Among the colleges requiring other itemized credentials, between 24 percent and 35 percent of the different categories said they would waive those requirements on the basis of age or years since

TABLE 44. Waiver of Various Requirements for Older Applicants

	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
High school graduation or equivalent					
Institutions that waive requirement on basis of age	263	118	6	54	85
Mean minimum age specified	26	21	30	27	31
High school subject requirements					
Institutions that waive requirement on basis of age	228	29	9	41	149
Mean minimum age specified	25	22	24	26	25
Minimum school grade average or class rank					
Institutions that waive requirement on basis of age	302	23	14	73	192
Mean minimum age specified	25	22	26	25	25
Admissions tests					
Institutions that waive requirement on basis of age	368	34	17	92	225
Mean minimum age specified	25	27	27	24	24

TABLE 45. Waiver of Various Requirements for Applicants Who Completed High School Some Years Ago

	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
High school subject requirements					
Institutions that waive requirement on basis of years since high school graduation	252	20	9	52	171
Mean number of years specified	6	7	6	5	6
Minimum school grade average or class rank					
Institutions that waive requirement on basis of years since high school graduation	337	16	15	93	213
Mean number of years specified	6	8	5	5	6
Admissions tests					
Institutions that waive requirement on basis of years since high school graduation	418	29	20	112	257
Mean number of years specified	6	9	4	5	6

high school graduation, specifying, on the average, approximately age 25 and between five and six years of elapsed time since high school graduation.

Proportionately more two-year public institutions waive the requirement of high school graduation for applicants of a certain age than do institutions of the other types. Of those that require high school graduation as a rule, some 36 percent of the two-year public colleges waive the requirement for applicants of a certain age, 21 years being the average specified minimum. Only 8 percent of the two-year private colleges offer such a waiver, specifying, on the average, a minimum age of 30 years. Among the four-year colleges, 17 percent of the public ones and 14 percent of the private ones that normally require high school graduation waive the requirement, specifying, on the average, minimum ages of 27 and 31 years, respectively. Table 44 and Table 45 give the details on waivers of admissions requirements for older applicants.

5. Accessibility and Selectivity

All the data on admissions policies and practices have so far been displayed and discussed only in relation to four institutional categories—the four combinations of public and private control, on the one hand, and two-year and four-year programs, on the other. Other dimensions of institutional variety, of course, might be, and sometimes are believed to be, factors in admissions practices. One of the more obvious ones is examined here.

The survey asked colleges to describe their general admissions practices by selecting the most appropriate of four descriptive statements on a continuum from very accessible, or open-door, to relatively inaccessible, or competitive. At the most accessible end are the institutions that admit any individual who wishes to attend, without review of such conventional academic qualifications as high school graduation or evidence of aptitude or previous achievement. At the other end are the institutions that have greater numbers of qualified applicants than they can, or wish to, accommodate and that must therefore limit the numbers to whom they offer admission. Hence, the label competitive is used for the latter because, in effect, qualified applicants to these institutions are competing with each other for the limited number of available spaces. Between the two extremes are ranged the majority of institutions, which do specify certain academic requirements above and beyond graduation from high school and which can and do accept all or most applicants who meet their requirements.

For this analysis three categories of accessibility will serve. First are the *open-door* institutions, so called because they are accessible to virtually all interested students, either without regard to previous academic achievement or requiring only graduation from high school, or the equivalent, and frequently waiving even that requirement for applicants who have reached a certain age.

A second category is labeled *selective* because it comprises colleges that serve only students who have achieved certain stated academic requirements above and beyond graduation from high school. These colleges specify some level or kind of achievement and offer admission to all or most applicants who meet their specifications. They may express their requirements as the completion of certain courses or subjects in high school, the attainment of a certain grade average or rank in the graduating class, or the compilation of some combination of qualifications (sometimes including admissions test scores) that show an acceptable probability of success in the college program. These colleges may vary greatly in their accessibility to students, depending on the requirements they specify, but they are alike in that applicants who meet their stated requirements can be reasonably certain of admission, regardless of the numbers or qualifications of other applicants to the same colleges.

The third category, here called *competitive*, differs from the second primarily in that respect. These colleges, too, specify their requirements, but for various reasons they have more applicants who meet those requirements than they can, or wish to, accommodate. Therefore, an applicant to one of these colleges cannot be sure of admission just because he or she has satisfied all the stated requirements. The college will make its selection of the desired number of students from its oversized pool of applicants, basing its choices on various factors discussed in this chapter.

The relationship between a college's accessibility or selectivity and its admissions policies is not clearly causal and may be only coincidental. For example, more than 70 percent of the open-door

institutions in the survey are two-year public colleges, and more than 90 percent of the two-year public colleges in the survey are open door. Policies and procedures far more characteristic of open-door institutions than of more selective ones, however, are not necessarily a result of their open-door status but may, in fact, stem from their public auspices or from some other common characteristic that has not been identified here. Similarly, 89 percent of the selective institutions and 96 percent of the competitive institutions are four-year colleges. We cannot be sure whether the policies and practices characteristic of selective and competitive institutions are functionally related to their selectivity or to their four-year programs or to some other characteristic that is common among them. Nevertheless, this chapter points out policies and procedures that seem to differ markedly from one category of accessibility to another and considers possible explanations of such relationships. Table 46 presents a breakdown of institutions by the three degrees of accessibility and the four categories of level and control.

Policy Determination

As noted earlier, a high proportion of two-year colleges reported no involvement by admissions committees in setting broad guidelines and specific admissions policies. It follows, then, that this is true also of open-door institutions, only 19 percent of which reported that their admissions committees have primary responsibility for broad guidelines on admissions. By contrast, 44 percent of the selective institutions and 55 percent of the competitive ones said their admissions committees have such responsibility.

Similarly, while only 38 percent of the open-door institutions reported that their admissions staffs have primary responsibility for specific admissions policies, the comparable figures for selective and competitive institutions were 51 percent and 65 percent, respectively.

These differences may reflect a combination of causes and influences, including accessibility or selectivity. Admissions requirements, if any, at open-door institutions are typically simple, objective, and readily verifiable by both the college and the prospective applicant. Frequently they are determined by state or local governments or by the institutions' boards of trustees as matters of public policy. To the extent that an institution's admissions guidelines and policies are mandated by external authorities, admissions staff and faculty committees are not responsible for them, and the functions of these groups are therefore somewhat different from those of their counterparts in institutions with greater autonomy in admissions matters. In the open-door institutions these groups

TABLE 46. General Admissions Practices According to Three Categories of Accessibility or Selectivity

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Open-door: Admit all who wish to attend without review of conventional academic qualifications; or admit any high school graduate or equivalent	No.	498	355	28	66	49
	%	34%	89%	35%	20%	8%
Selective: Admit majority of applicants who meet some specified level of academic achievement or other qualification above and beyond high school graduation	No	816	36	49	232	499
	%	56%	9%	60%	70%	77%
Competitive: Admit only a limited number of those applicants who meet specified level of academic achievement or other qualifications above and beyond high school graduation	No.	124	1	4	32	87
	%	8%	<1%	5%	10%	13%
No response	No.	25	9	0	3	13
	%	2%	2%		1%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

deal less with such questions as which of two applicants is the more promising, whether a particular applicant is likely to be academically successful, or which applicants will best meet the college's needs for students in certain programs and activities. Their function is more a matter of verifying that applicants have graduated from high school (if that is required) and that they meet nonacademic requirements such as in-district or in-state residence. (Admissions staff members may have other functions, of course, such as awarding financial aid and maintaining student records, but they are outside the scope of this report.)

Admissions Requirements

Although, by definition, open-door colleges do not require that applicants have completed prescribed amounts of study in particular high school subjects, such prescription is apparently associated with the degree of accessibility in selective and competitive institutions. This shows most clearly in the data on mathematics and foreign language requirements. (Requirements in English and social studies tend to reflect typical state and local requirements for graduation from high school. Requirements in science are stated in so many ways, involving such variables as laboratory work and physical-biological distinctions, as to defy summarization here.) Some 50 percent of the competitive institutions reported that they require three or four years of high school mathematics, whereas only 16 percent of the selective institutions require as many as three years of mathematics. Similarly, 49 percent of the competitive institutions require at least two years of foreign language, while only 27 percent of the selective institutions have that requirement.

Furthermore, competitive institutions are somewhat more likely than are selective institutions to interpret their stated requirements rigidly. Fifteen percent of the former and only 6 percent of the latter said that a student who has not completed the prescribed pattern of preparation will not be admitted. Another 44 percent of the competitive colleges and 36 percent of the selective colleges said their published requirements are generally considered rigid, although they are waived in a limited number of cases.

Possibly contrary to expectations, selective institutions are more likely than competitive institutions to have minimum standards, expressed by high school achievement or admissions test scores, below which an applicant is generally considered ineligible for admission. Only 32 percent of the competitive institutions reported they require a certain minimum high school grade average, but 60 percent of the selective institutions said they do so. The minimum grade average expected by about half the competitive institutions and three-fourths of the selective institutions mentioned above, however, is 2.0 or less.

Thirty-nine percent of the competitive institutions reported a minimum performance on the SAT, expressed as a sum of the verbal and mathematical scores, the average minimum being 838 (or the equivalent of scores of 419 on each of the two parts). A larger percentage (44 percent) of the selective institutions reported slightly lower minimums, averaging 733 for the sum of the two scores. Fifteen percent of the competitive institutions said they require, on the average, a minimum ACT composite score of 19.9, and 38 percent of the selective institutions require, on the average, a composite score of at least 15.6. The numbers of open-door institutions with any such requirements were insignificant.

Uses of Admissions Tests

Except for the fact that approximately half the open-door institutions do not require admissions tests (consistent with a similar observation about two-year public colleges, reported earlier), no important relationship is apparent between the reported uses of admissions tests and institutional accessibility or selectivity. Competitive institutions, however, are more likely to have conducted validity studies than are selective or open-door institutions; 73 percent of the competitive institutions reported such studies (46 percent less than two years old), compared with 51 percent of the selective institutions (38 percent less than two years old) and 23 percent of the open-door institutions (14 percent less than two years old).

Personal Qualities as Factors in Admission

Generally speaking, personal qualities of applicants do not figure in their admission to open-door colleges any more than do academic qualifications, although some of these colleges state that applicants must be of good moral character, or words to similar effect. Among selective and competitive institutions, however, there appears to be some relationship between admission and the personal qualities of applicants. On a shopping list of "desirable" personal characteristics, higher proportions of competitive than of selective institutions consistently reported that each quality was often an important factor or sometimes an important

factor in their admissions decisions. For example, although leadership capabilities were reported to be often important by larger proportions of both selective and competitive institutions than was any of the other listed qualities, only 41 percent of the selective institutions said it was often important, compared with 73 percent of the competitive institutions. A similar comparison obtains for all the personal qualities listed. The relationship is not changed when the numbers of institutions that said a quality is sometimes important are added to those saying it is often important.

Furthermore, although it might seem that institutions' public or private auspices might have some bearing on their attention to applicants' personal qualities (and indeed they might), these data suggest that accessibility or selectivity is the overriding influence. For example, 40 percent of the competitive four-year private colleges said that leadership capabilities are often important in their decisions, and 93 percent said that they are often or sometimes important. The comparable percentages for selective four-year private colleges are 20 percent and 78 percent, respectively. Similarly, the same qualification was reported to be often important by 34 percent of the competitive four-year public colleges and often or sometimes important by 88 percent of that group. Among the selective four-year public colleges the comparable percentages are 10 and 45. The implication seems to be that colleges with greater numbers of academically qualified applicants than they plan to admit are more likely to consider personal qualifications in their admissions decisions than are colleges that can and will admit all or most of the qualified applicants.

Admissions Credentials

Given the varied kinds of information required by colleges of their applicants for admission, which credentials count most in admissions decisions, and are there differences in this regard between competitive and selective institutions? The question posed in the survey dealt with 13 credentials above and beyond high school graduation and so had little relevance for open-door institutions, most of which reported they do not consider these credentials in their admissions decisions.

The competitive and the selective institutions were close to unanimous in their responses regarding certain credentials. The largest proportions of both groups—86 percent of the selective colleges and 85 percent of the competitive colleges—rated high school academic performance, as represented by grade average or class rank, either the single most important factor or a very important factor in their decisions. Next in the frequency of such ratings were aptitude test scores, such as the SAT, ACT, or PSAT/NMSQT, which were judged most important or very important by 63 percent of the competitive colleges and 58 percent of the selective colleges. Third rank among the credentials went to the pat-
selective institutions rated most important or very tern of high school subjects taken, which 60 percent of the competitive and 33 percent of the important. None of the other itemized credentials was rated very important or higher by a majority of either the competitive or the selective colleges. Lowest on the list for competitive colleges, with 2 percent rating it very important, and next to lowest among the selective colleges, with 3 percent rating it very important, was the applicant's ability to pay the costs of atter ding college. This should be reassuring to applicants who fear that by informing selective colleges of their need for financial aid they may be jeopardizing their chances of admission. Indeed, the proportion of selective and competitive colleges that reported they do not consider the applicant's ability to pay in reaching their admissions decisions is the same as that of open-door institutions—approximately 80 percent in all categories of accessibility.

6. Recruitment and Marketing

At a time when the annual production of new high school graduates in the United States is shrinking because of declining birth rates in the 1960s, there is a special interest in the colleges' efforts to attract students in order to maintain enrollments, enhance athletic programs, balance budgets, protect endangered departments, or accomplish other purposes. With a smaller pool of prospective college students coming from the high schools, one might anticipate substantial preoccupation with recruitment. The survey asked several questions designed to provide a description of what colleges are doing to manage their enrollment needs and to recruit students as necessary.

Enrollment and Marketing Studies

In response to a question on enrollment studies, about 54 percent of the survey institutions said they had conducted studies to project their future enrollments; on the average, these studies had been conducted 1.2 years earlier. By institutional type, the four-year public colleges were most likely to have conducted enrollment projection studies—67 percent had done so—and the two-year private colleges were least likely, with only 43 percent having done so. Fifty-two percent of the four-year private colleges and 47 percent of the two-year public colleges had made such studies. The average age of their latest studies was similar for all types. Table 47 reports the data.

Another question dealt with the conduct of marketing studies, including such problems as market segmentation, positioning, cost effectiveness of recruiting activities, communications effectiveness, and so forth. Twelve percent of all the colleges reported they conduct such studies regularly, including about 19 percent of the four-year private colleges and 10 percent or less of the other institutional types. Another 39 percent of all institutions said they have conducted informal marketing studies; 46 percent of the four-year private colleges did so, and the proportions of the other types ranged from 26 percent to 41 percent. Even so, 47 percent of all institutions said they had not conducted marketing studies, and 3 percent did not respond to the item. (See Table 48.)

Recruiting Procedures

The survey posed 13 procedures used by colleges to recruit students and asked the participants to report the extent of their use of each listed item. The two leading procedures, by wide margins, were direct mailings to prospective students and participation in college nights and fairs or other group events involving other colleges as well. Sixty-four percent of all the colleges use direct mail very frequently for recruiting; the smallest proportion were the two-year public colleges (47 percent), and the largest proportion (75 percent) were the four-year private colleges. Sixty-four percent of all the colleges also reported their very frequent use of college nights and other such group events; again the two-year public colleges reported this least often (47 percent), but the greatest proportion that use this procedure were the four-year public colleges (77 percent).

The relatively infrequent use of direct mail and college nights by two-year public colleges seems to reflect a generally lower level of recruiting activity among colleges in this category, although they were the leading users of one procedure used by relatively few colleges in the other categories, namely,

TABLE 47. Recency of Enrollment Projection Studies

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Institutions that have conducted enrollment projection studies	No.	784	189	35	222	338
	%	54%	47%	43%	67%	52%
Mean number of years since most recent study		1.2	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.2

TABLE 48. Conduct of Marketing Studies

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Regularly conduct studies in such areas	No.	174	19	8	27	120
	%	12%	5%	10%	8%	19%
Have conducted largely informal studies	No.	564	103	33	132	296
	%	39%	26%	41%	40%	46%
Have not conducted such studies	No.	686	263	36	174	213
	%	47%	66%	44%	52%	33%
No response	No.	39	16	4	0	19
	%	3%	4%	5%		3%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

advertising in local newspapers. Fifty-three percent of the two-year public colleges use this procedure, compared with 26 percent of all the survey colleges.

Among the two-year private colleges the three leading procedures are direct mail, used very frequently by 70 percent; participation in college nights and so forth, used by 64 percent; and telephone calls to prospective students (or toll-free lines for incoming calls), used by 51 percent.

Among the four-year private colleges, 75 percent reported very frequent use of direct mail, 70 percent reported very frequent participation in college nights, and 50 percent reported very frequent use of telephone calls to prospects (or toll-free lines for incoming calls).

Among the four-year public colleges, 77 percent reported very frequent participation in college nights, 61 percent reported very frequent use of direct mail, and 35 percent reported very frequent invitations for prospective students and families to visit their campus at institutional expense.

The least-reported procedures on the list were advertising on educational television, used very frequently by only 3 percent of the survey participants; advertising in professional journals, also used by 3 percent of the group; advertising on billboards and bus or subway posters, reported by 5 percent; advertising in high school newspapers, 5 percent; and advertising on commercial radio or television, 11 percent. Table 49 specifies the colleges' use of various procedures.

High School Visits. Even more common than the most popular recruiting procedures discussed in the preceding paragraphs are visits to high schools by representatives of the colleges. This activity was treated in a separate question in the survey, which asked about the frequency of such visits by various kinds of representatives. Seventy-eight percent of all the institutions reported that members of their admissions or high school relations staff very frequently visit schools. This was reported by 67 percent of the two-year public colleges and by more than 80 percent of the other institutional categories. Ranking a distant second among the very frequent visitors were the coaches, band directors, and other activity advisers, reported by only 15 percent of all institutions, including 24 percent of four-year public colleges, 14 percent of two-year public colleges, 12 percent of four-year private colleges, and 5 percent of two-year private colleges.

With only minor differences among institutional types, 4 percent of all the colleges reported very frequent use of current students as high school visitors, 3 percent reported very frequent use of faculty members, and 1 percent reported very frequent use of paid recruiters who are not regular employees of the college. The responses are given in Table 50.

TABLE 49. Recruiting Procedures Used Very Frequently

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Expense-paid visits to campus for prospective students and families	No.	556	97	36	115	308
	%	38%	24%	44%	35%	48%
Expense-paid visits to campus for high school personnel	No.	398	116	22	93	167
	%	27%	29%	27%	28%	26%
Participation in college nights, fairs, and other group sessions with other colleges	No.	937	178	52	255	452
	%	64%	44%	64%	77%	70%
Visits to noninstitutional central locations, with students and families interested only in same institution invited	No.	225	37	15	45	128
	%	15%	9%	19%	14%	20%
Direct mailings to prospective students	No.	938	190	57	203	488
	%	64%	47%	70%	61%	75%
Telephone calls to prospective students, or toll-free lines for incoming calls	No.	521	60	41	95	325
	%	36%	15%	51%	29%	50%
Advertisements on billboards or posters in buses or subways	No.	69	30	3	8	28
	%	5%	7%	4%	2%	4%
Advertisements on commercial radio or television	No.	166	108	4	19	35
	%	11%	27%	5%	6%	5%
Advertisements on educational television	No.	46	26	0	11	9
	%	3%	6%		3%	1%
Advertisements in local newspapers	No.	381	214	21	49	97
	%	26%	53%	26%	15%	15%
Advertisements in high school papers	No.	77	39	3	11	24
	%	5%	10%	4%	3%	4%
Advertisements in professional journals	No.	47	7	2	10	28
	%	3%	2%	2%	3%	4%
Advertisements in promotional films, on videotapes, cassettes, etc.	No.	180	56	7	49	68
	%	12%	14%	9%	15%	10%

Use of Direct Mail. Increasingly, colleges are relying on direct mail to recruit students. Names and addresses of prospective or potential college students are offered by a variety of sources for use by colleges in direct mail communications. Some lists are by-products of nationwide testing, talent search, and scholarship programs. Others are produced by commercial list merchants, and still others are offered by state and local agencies. The survey asked which sources colleges used. Most expressed a preference for names and addresses of students participating in nationwide testing, talent search, and scholarship programs.

Targeted Recruitment. For many reasons colleges make special efforts to recruit students with certain qualifications or characteristics. One survey item asked colleges to identify the groups of students toward which they direct special recruiting activities. From a list of 13 such groups, the largest proportions of all the colleges (67 percent) and of three of the four categories reported special recruiting activities directed toward academically talented students. Of the four institutional categories, only the two-year public colleges direct their recruitment more frequently to a different group—adult students.

Athletes are the next most likely group to be the targets of recruitment, as reported by 58 percent of the total group, including 78 percent of the four-year public colleges and 59 percent of the four-year private colleges. The second target group

TABLE 50. College Representatives Used Very Frequently to Visit High Schools for Recruiting

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Admissions or high school relations staff	No.	1,148	269	65	281	533
	%	78%	67%	80%	84%	82%
Current students	No.	59	9	3	17	30
	%	4%	2%	4%	5%	5%
Alumni	No.	31	5	2	3	21
	%	2%	1%	2%	1%	3%
Faculty	No.	47	15	2	13	17
	%	3%	4%	2%	4%	3%
Paid recruiters who are not regular institutional employees	No.	19	5	3	3	8
	%	1%	1%	4%	1%	1%
Coaches, band directors, other activity advisers	No.	218	58	4	81	75
	%	15%	14%	5%	24%	12%
Others	No.	60	33	2	8	17
	%	4%	8%	2%	2%	3%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 51. Special Recruiting Activities for Certain Groups

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Athletes	No.	846	172	29	260	385
	%	58%	43%	36%	78%	59%
Academically talented	No.	984	140	44	281	519
	%	67%	35%	54%	84%	80%
Alumni relatives	No.	449	30	32	89	298
	%	31%	7%	40%	27%	46%
Faculty relatives	No.	261	33	18	41	169
	%	18%	8%	22%	12%	26%
Members of racial and ethnic minorities	No.	803	163	25	253	362
	%	55%	41%	31%	76%	56%
Disadvantaged students	No.	568	156	17	169	226
	%	39%	39%	21%	51%	35%
Physically handicapped persons	No.	341	125	8	112	96
	%	23%	31%	10%	34%	15%
Students with special talents in such areas as art, music, drama, debate	No.	731	118	36	220	357
	%	50%	29%	44%	66%	55%
Adult students	No.	706	218	32	187	269
	%	48%	54%	40%	56%	42%
Out-of-state or out-of-district students	No.	545	64	24	133	324
	%	37%	16%	30%	40%	50%
Part-time students	No.	541	169	24	139	209
	%	37%	42%	30%	42%	32%
Veterans	No.	488	187	20	143	138
	%	33%	47%	25%	43%	21%
Military personnel on active duty	No.	233	60	7	88	78
	%	16%	15%	9%	26%	12%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

TABLE 52. Financial Inducements for Accepted Applicants to Enroll

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
No-need scholarships used	No.	751	124	35	199	393
	%	51%	31%	43%	60%	61%
Modifications in packaging used	No.	496	83	20	91	302
	%	34%	21%	25%	27%	47%
No-need scholarships or modifications in packaging offered to applicants from the following groups:						
Athletes	No.	654	126	25	211	292
	%	45%	31%	31%	63%	45%
Racial or ethnic minorities	No.	381	71	12	108	190
	%	26%	18%	15%	32%	29%
Disadvantaged students	No.	318	72	12	77	157
	%	22%	18%	15%	23%	24%
Students with special nonacademic talents	No.	579	112	28	176	263
	%	40%	28%	35%	53%	41%
Academically talented students	No.	890	145	44	241	460
	%	61%	36%	54%	72%	71%
Students from different geographic locations	No.	174	35	7	44	88
	%	12%	9%	9%	13%	14%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

among the two-year public colleges are veterans, toward whom 47 percent of these colleges direct special efforts. Students with special talents in art, music, drama, debate, and so forth, are the second most frequent target of the two-year private colleges, with 44 percent reporting special efforts to recruit such students.

In the total group of survey colleges, members of racial and ethnic minorities are the objects of special recruiting efforts by the third largest proportion—55 percent; students with special talents are fourth—50 percent; and adult students are fifth—48 percent. None of the other eight groups was designated as the object of special recruiting efforts by as many as half the colleges. Table 51 summarizes these recruiting activities.

Financial Inducements. A college may use financial aid as a means of inducing certain accepted applicants to enroll there instead of at some other institution. One form of financial aid is the no-need scholarship, which is a grant of money unrelated to the recipient's financial circumstances but is based, instead, on some other quality or qualification that the college finds attractive or worthy of reward. Another form of aid is the modified package, which offers the sought-after student an unusually attractive combination of kinds of aid. The package is most likely disproportionately high in grant aid and low-interest loan, and low in employment and conventional loan, although generally totaling no more than the estimated amount the student needs.

About half the survey colleges reported they give no-need scholarships, and about one-third said they use modified aid packages to encourage enrollment by accepted applicants. Both these practices are reported proportionately least by two-year public colleges, next by two-year private colleges, next by four-year public colleges, and most by four-year private colleges.

Just as recruitment in general tends to be aimed especially at certain groups, so is the offering of financial inducements. The greatest proportion of all the survey colleges—61 percent—and of each of the four categories reported that they offer no-need scholarships or modified aid packages to academically talented students. Of the groups listed in the survey item, athletes are next; the proportion of all colleges offering them financial inducements was 45 percent. Students with special nonacademic talents come next; 40 percent of all the colleges said they offer financial inducements to these students. Next in order are racial and ethnic minorities, reported by 26 percent of the colleges; disadvantaged students, as distinct from racial or ethnic minorities, reported by 22 percent; and students from different geographic locations, reported by only 12 percent of the colleges. Differ-

TABLE 53. Financial Incentives for Recruitment of New Students

		All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Current students given financial incentive to recruit other students	No.	37	10	5	3	19
	%	3%	2%	6%	1%	3%
Individuals not employed directly by institution have financial incentive	No.	19	3	2	2	12
	%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Neither current students nor other individuals not employed directly by institution given financial incentives or remuneration for recruiting new students	No.	1,383	378	73	323	609
	%	95%	94%	90%	97%	94%
No response	No.	31	12	2	5	12
	%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%
Total numbers of institutions		1,463	401	81	333	648

ences among the four categories of institutions were minor and reflect differences in the total extent of their use of financial inducements rather than their choice of groups to be recruited by these means. Table 52 describes these uses of financial aid.

Use of Paid Recruiters. One recruiting strategy that has apparently been discussed more than it has been used by colleges is the payment of commissions or bounties to independent recruiters, not on the college's regular staff. Such payments are sometimes made to currently enrolled students and sometimes to such enterprises as college referral services or college placement agencies, but apparently any such procedure is uncommon, and 95 percent of the respondents said they make such payments neither to students nor to other nonstaff recruiters. All categories responded similarly. See Table 53 for a summary of the responses on financial incentives.

7. Guidance and Placement

Guidance for Prospective Students

For reasons of both education and sound management, a college disseminates information about itself to help prospective students decide whether or not to apply for admission. From an educational standpoint, a college wants to recruit only those students who might benefit educationally from enrolling. From a management standpoint, a continuing policy of good public relations, a good reputation in the education community, and a high rate of retention among its enrolled freshmen require that a college be honest in its representations and that it promise prospective students no more than it can deliver.

The survey asked colleges about their practices in supplying certain self-descriptive information. In reference to a list of 14 kinds or bits of information, colleges were asked whether they provided each one to prospective students routinely, on request, or not at all.

Two kinds of information were reported by majorities of all the colleges and all categories to be provided routinely. Seventy percent said they routinely provide "examples of the kinds of financial aid available to 'typical' students," and 59 percent said they provide "detailed descriptions of the actual basis for admissions decisions." Both these phrases from the survey questionnaire allow a wide latitude in interpretation, so the responses hardly define the extent of the colleges' disclosure on these points. Perhaps the surest interpretation would be that, in general, there is widest agreement among the colleges that these kinds of information should be reported routinely to prospective students, as required, in large part, by the 1978 Higher Education Amendments.

Only one other kind of information was reported by as many as one-fourth of the colleges to be provided routinely: "equations or schedules for use in calculating the probability or amount of financial aid that might be awarded." In light of the 1978 Higher Education Amendments, which require that certain information be provided to financial aid applicants, it is perhaps surprising that only 25 percent of the colleges reported making such information available routinely (unless, of course, the others reasoned that such information is already provided by other sources and need not also be provided by them or they provide such information on request only).

When the colleges that provide such self-descriptive information on request are added to those that provide it routinely, the extent of reported disclosure increases markedly. More than 90 percent of all the colleges and of all the categories provide "examples of the kinds of financial aid available." More than 80 percent disclose "detailed descriptions of the actual basis for admissions decisions." At least 60 percent provide "equations or schedules for use in calculating the probability or amount of financial aid that might be awarded," "the employment experience, average salary, etc., for graduates in specific programs or curriculums," and "the percentage of graduates who enroll in graduate or professional schools." When only four-year colleges are included in the calculation, over 75 percent reported they provide information about the rate of their graduates' enrollment in graduate or professional schools.

More than half the total group of colleges provide, routinely or on request, "descriptions of exceptions to the standard admissions policy" and "the employment experience, average salary, etc., for graduates of the institution as a whole." More than half the four-year colleges but relatively few

of the two-year colleges provide "profiles of the high school grade point averages or rank in class of prior years' admitted students."

Similarly, more than half the four-year colleges but a somewhat smaller proportion of the two-year colleges report "probabilities of completion or rates of retention for the institution as a whole." Substantially fewer institutions report such retention data with respect to either "specific types or categories of students" or "specific programs or courses of study."

Because more information is provided on request than is provided routinely, students and their counselors would apparently be well advised to request any needed information that has not been provided routinely.

Placement in Freshman Courses

Closely related to guidance for students in their college choice is guidance in their entry at the appropriate level in their freshman-year courses. This is especially true for students who have successfully completed college-level courses while still in high school and who wish to avoid the wasteful repetition of those courses in college.

The survey asked colleges how many of their freshmen in fall 1978 had been granted advanced standing, credit, exemption, or placement on the basis of various examinations and other evidence of college-level achievement.

Seventy percent of the four-year colleges and 50 percent of the two-year colleges said they had granted such recognition on the basis of nationally administered examinations, such as those of the College Board's Advanced Placement Program (APP) and the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP). All told, 932 institutions reported such awards to more than 63,000 entering freshmen in 1978. The most selective institutions are most likely to recognize college-level achievement on this basis. Seventy-seven percent of the competitive institutions do so, compared with 68 percent of the selective and 53 percent of the open-door institutions.

About one-third of all the survey institutions use locally developed examinations for this purpose, with only small differences among the categories. About one-third also recognize military courses and experience, but in this area there are marked differences among the categories. While 48 percent of the public institutions give recognition for college-level achievement in military courses or experience, only 22 percent of the private institutions do so. Of the most accessible, or open-door, institutions, 46 percent recognize military training and experience, whereas only 32 percent of the selective and 12 percent of the competitive institutions do so.

A small but significant 14 percent said they had given recognition in 1978 on the basis of portfolios that documented prior work or accomplishments, with small differences among institutional categories.

Finally, 51 percent of all institutions reported they had recognized college-level work students had taken while in high school, but this response seems to duplicate in part their reported recognition by means of examinations and portfolios and is, therefore, difficult to interpret separately. Table 54 records the statistics.

TABLE 54. Colleges' Grants of Advanced Standing, Credit, Exemption, and Placement in 1978, Based on Various Applicant Credentials

	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Nationally administered examinations, such as the College Board's Advanced Placement Program and the College-Level Examination Program					
Number of institutions	932	206	36	243	447
Mean number of students granted such recognition in 1978	68	37	11	142	48
Total number of students granted such recognition in 1978 by these institutions	63,780	7,622	196	34,506	21,456
Locally developed or administered examinations					
Number of institutions	478	159	17	124	178
Mean number of students granted such recognition in 1978	75	42	12	181	37
Total number of students granted such recognition in 1978 by these institutions	35,912	6,678	204	22,444	6,586
Evaluations of portfolios documenting prior work or accomplishments					
Number of institutions	212	80	6	44	82
Mean number of students granted such recognition in 1978	33	48	60	19	24
Total number of students granted such recognition in 1978 by these institutions	7,004	3,840	360	836	1,968
College-level work taken while in high school					
Number of institutions	751	162	33	203	353
Mean number of students granted such recognition in 1978	27	29	12	44	19
Total number of students granted such recognition in 1978 by these institutions	20,733	4,698	396	8,932	6,707
Military courses or experience					
Number of institutions	512	183	16	169	144
Mean number of students granted such recognition in 1978	34	45	21	39	16
Total number of students granted such recognition in 1978 by these institutions	17,466	8,235	336	6,591	2,304

8. Changing Roles, Standards, and Procedures

In view of the foregoing description of how the process of college admissions is performed today, one might wonder if this is different from the past and if the future is likely to be different from the present. The survey asked several questions to elicit observations of change from 1970 to 1978 and anticipations of change by the mid-1980s. The tabulated responses are shown in Table 55.

Responsibility for Guidelines and Policies

Most respondents in all institutional categories reported that the admissions roles of the various parties were about the same in 1978 as in 1970. Of the remaining respondents, slightly more reported increased importance than decreased importance for each individual or group listed in the item. The group experiencing the greatest gain were students, whose role had become more important according to 11 percent of the respondents and less important according to 3 percent.

Looking ahead to the mid-1980s, the respondents were even more nearly unanimous in anticipating little change in the roles of all the admissions participants. Almost all the colleges that forecast change for any of the parties, however, said their roles would become more important.

In summary, it appears that among all the major types of institutions, the various admissions roles have become relatively stable and are expected to remain so. Stability, however, does not mean stagnation, and there is some continual shifting and changing of responsibilities; the most clearly indicated future change is the greater involvement of all participants in determining institutional admissions policy.

Standards and Requirements

Just under half the institutions reported that their general level of selectivity, required pattern of high school subjects, and required grade average or class rank were about the same in 1978 as in 1970, and about two-thirds expected them to be about the same in the mid-1980s. Twenty-three percent observed that their general level of selectivity was now lower than in 1970, but 18 percent said it was higher. Twenty-nine percent reported a lowering of the standard with respect to high school subjects completed, and only 11 percent said this had risen. A number of explanations suggest themselves, including increasing abandonment of the conventional Carnegie Unit in school curriculums in favor of short courses, independent study, and other flexible arrangements. The changed standard may also reflect growth in the recognition of the high school years as a time for intellectual and vocational exploration, which requires some freedom for trial experiences in a variety of skills and disciplines, in contrast to early commitment to extensive study in a few prescribed subjects. Whatever the explanation, 61 percent of the respondents anticipate no further change in this direction, and a small majority of the others expect the pendulum to swing back to the side of higher standards as expressed by the pattern of high school subjects completed.

With respect to grade point average and class rank as measures of admissions standards, just under half the colleges reported no change since 1970, and the remainder divided about evenly between those reporting an increase and those reporting a decline.

The fourth expression of admissions standards

TABLE 55. Percentages of All Institutions that Reported Changes from 1970 to 1978 and Projected Changes for Period of 1978 to mid-1980s

	1970 to 1978				1978 to Mid-1980s			
	Lower	*Same*	*Higher*	*No response*	*Lower*	*Same*	*Higher*	*No Response*
Expected enrollment					14%	54%	30%	2%
Proportion of entering freshmen admitted with understanding they would enroll primarily for remedial course work	7%	14%	22%	57%	5	26	20	51
Selection of standards of college:								
General	23	46	18	13	14	66	10	11
Pattern of high school course work	29	44	11	15	9	61	15	15
High school achievement	19	44	21	16	8	61	16	15
Test scores	34	33	13	20	14	52	14	19
Importance of roles of:								
Admissions committee	12	49	15	23	3	60	17	20
Admissions staff	9	59	19	13	2	66	21	11
President	10	63	11	16	4	67	15	14
Executive council, etc.	7	58	10	25	3	61	13	22
Faculty senate	4	49	7	40	2	53	9	36
Departments, schools, etc.	4	54	11	32	2	55	14	28
Board of trustees	3	63	7	26	2	64	11	23
Students	3	47	11	39	1	54	10	35
State legislature	2	40	4	54	<1	39	9	52
State coordinating board or "1202" commission	1	34	4	61	1	33	8	58
Proportion of entering freshmen from out of state or district	22	40	27	11	10	54	27	9
Importance placed on various credentials:								
High school academic achievement	9	61	11	19	4	67	11	18
Aptitude tests	17	49	13	21	8	61	10	21
Achievement tests	9	35	6	51	5	41	6	48
High school recommendations	14	49	4	33	5	59	3	32
Recommendations from church, employer, etc.	9	46	3	41	4	54	2	41
Interviews	7	51	8	34	2	57	8	33
Personal essay or autobiography	8	37	5	50	3	45	4	48
Health statement	8	40	2	50	2	45	2	51
Place of residence	5	32	3	60	3	36	4	57
Portfolios, etc.	3	39	5	53	2	43	5	50
Pattern of high school course work	7	54	7	32	2	59	9	30
Declaration of major	3	45	6	47	2	46	7	45
Ability to pay	3	30	4	63	2	31	7	61

TABLE 55. *(Continued)*

	1970 to 1978				1978 to Mid-1980s			
	Lower	*Same*	*Higher*	*No response*	*Lower*	*Same*	*Higher*	*No Response*
Extent of recruitment of various groups:								
Athletes	11%	47%	13%	29%	2%	54%	18%	26%
Academically talented	13	46	18	22	1	39	40	26
Alumni relatives	6	48	8	38	1	41	25	32
Faculty relatives	4	52	4	41	1	50	12	37
Minorities	12	41	22	26	1	46	31	22
Disadvantages	9	44	16	31	1	50	22	27
Handicapped	5	44	14	37	1	46	22	31
Students with special talents	10	49	13	29	1	47	27	25
Adults	9	36	27	28	2	31	46	21
Students from out of state or district	8	46	12	33	1	44	24	30
Part-time students	7	41	19	32	1	37	35	27
Veterans	11	45	11	32	6	49	16	29
Military personnel	4	46	7	42	2	49	9	40
Extent of use of various recruiting procedures:								
Expense-paid visits for prospective students and families	9	51	21	19	2	49	33	16
Expense-paid visits for high school staff members	11	53	21	15	4	51	33	12
College nights, fairs, etc.	17	46	28	10	4	53	34	8
Invitational meetings in central locations with interested students	6	46	28	20	3	45	38	14
Direct mail	14	33	41	12	2	38	53	8
Telephone calls to students, and toll-free lines for incoming calls	8	37	37	17	3	39	46	12
Billboards, etc.	3	48	15	34	4	52	16	27
Commercial radio or TV advertising	5	45	26	24	4	46	32	17
Educational TV advertising	2	47	17	34	5	47	23	25
Local newspaper advertising	9	48	27	16	3	46	39	12
High school paper advertising	4	50	18	28	6	51	24	20
Professional journal advertising	3	52	16	29	5	57	14	23
Promotional films, videotapes, etc.	6	44	27	23	5	42	37	16

considered in this survey item, scores on standardized admissions tests, was the standard in which the greatest proportion of the colleges reported change since 1970. Only 33 percent said their standards in this regard were about the same in 1978 as in 1970, whereas 34 percent reported a lowering of this standard and 13 percent reported a rise. This seems consistent with the reported downtrend in students' obtained scores on these tests. Looking ahead, however, about half the colleges expect their standards to stay the same to the mid-1980s, and the others that responded are divided evenly between those expecting increases and those expecting further decreases.

Importance of Various Credentials

When asked about changes in the importance they attach to various admissions credentials, less than 15 percent of the colleges reported increases or decreases in the importance of any credential except aptitude test scores, which 17 percent said were less important in 1978 than in 1970 and 13 percent said were more important. Sixty-one percent anticipate no change in the importance of aptitude tests by the mid-1980s, while 10 percent expect them to become more important and 8 percent, less important.

All the itemized credentials are expected to hold about the same importance in the mid-1980s as in 1978 for most colleges who responded to the question. On the whole, the picture is one of considerable stability in this respect as in those items previously discussed.

Finally, in answer to a survey item that asked about prescribed years of study in various high school subjects, the responses can be summarized as virtually no change over the entire span from 1970 to the mid-1980s in any of the listed subjects. The average number of years required by all colleges in each subject was the same for 1970 and the projected mid-1980s as for 1978, which was reported in Table 8.

Recruitment Practices

If admissions policies, standards, and requirements have been relatively stable since 1970, at least one aspect of admissions procedure—recruitment—has been changing markedly. For an item listing 13 recruiting activites or programs, between 15 percent and 41 percent of the respondents reported noticeably higher use in 1978 than in 1970, and from 14 percent to 53 percent said their use will be noticeably higher in the mid-1980s than in 1978. The greatest increases since 1970 were in direct mailings to prospective students, with 41 percent of the colleges reporting increased use; telephone calls to prospective students (or toll-free lines for incoming calls) were increased as reported by 37 percent. The same two procedures are slated for increased use in the mid-1980s by 53 percent and 46 percent of the colleges, respectively.

None of the listed procedures has been used less since 1970 by as many as 20 percent of the respondents, and none is expected to be used less in the future by as many as 10 percent. In a word, recruitment by all means has increased and is expected to continue to increase.

Have certain groups of potential students been emphasized in colleges' recruitment efforts, or will they be in the future? One questionnaire item asked this about 13 identifiable student groups. The general answer is that more colleges were trying harder to recruit all groups in 1978 than in 1970, and many more will be trying even harder in the mid-1980s. The target in 1978 of stepped-up efforts in the largest proportion of colleges—27 percent—was the adult population, with another 36 percent reporting about the same effort toward this group as in 1970. Increased special efforts were directed to racial or ethnic minorities in 1978 by 22 percent of the respondents; 41 percent reported about the same effort as in 1970. Part-time students were third in the proportion of institutions that made increased efforts to recruit them—19 percent—with 41 percent maintaining their 1970 level of effort toward this group. Athletes, often the most publicized targets of college recruiting, have reportedly not been the subjects of noticeably greater special efforts since 1970. Only 13 percent reported a higher level of effort directed toward athletes, offset by 11 percent reporting noticeably lower efforts toward this group.

By the mid-1980s only a handful of institutions expect to lower their level of special recruitment activity toward any group, and every group can expect to be the object of increased effort by 9 percent to 46 percent of the respondents. The high figure applies to adult students. While 40 percent of the colleges expect to step up their recruitment of academically talented students, 35 percent will aim more effort at part-time students, 31 percent at racial or ethnic minorities, 25 percent at alumni relatives, 27 percent at students with special talents, 24 percent at out-of-state or out-of-district students, 22 percent at students with physical handicaps, 22 percent at disadvantaged students (as distinct from racial or ethnic minorities), 18 percent at athletes, 16 percent at veterans, 12 percent at faculty relatives, and 9 percent at military person-

nel on active duty. Almost all the remaining institutions that responded to the question expect to maintain their 1978 levels of special effort toward these groups.

In response to another survey item, 30 percent of the institutions said they expect their enrollments in the mid-1980s to be more than 5 percent higher than their 1978 enrollments; another 54 percent expect a change of no more than plus or minus 5 percent. Only 14 percent expect to drop more than 5 percent below the 1978 levels. The targeted recruitment groups reported in the preceding paragraphs are evidently an important element in the colleges' plans to realize these enrollment forecasts in the face of a declining 18-year-old population.

Conclusion

There is a high risk of oversimplification in generalizing about a process as complex as that which determines who will go where to college in the United States. With a minimum of central control and a maximum of individual and institutional autonomy, great variety in policies and procedures is perhaps the most predictable characteristic of the process, as the data gathered in this study confirm. Differences are found not only from one institutional type (defined by level and control) to another but also among institutions of the same type. On the other hand, there are also remarkable degrees of agreement on many points of procedure and principle, where consensus has evolved in the absence of central control, allowing for the voluntary development of common forms and procedures, to the advantage of both applicants and institutions.

The absence of central control might lead one to expect the admissions process to be either paralyzed by the inability to make decisions, and therefore unable to change, or volatile and unstable, and therefore unable to hold a steady course. The data seem to refute both expectations, with large majorities of respondents observing relatively little change in policies and procedures from 1970 to 1978 and anticipating even less change from 1978 to the mid-1980s. If their observations and expectations are valid, it is reasonable to conclude that colleges continue generally to support the policies and practices that had evolved by 1970 and to consider them appropriate for conditions anticipated in the years just ahead.

If there is discrepancy between the picture of college admissions painted in the public press today and the picture portrayed by the survey responses, it may well be in the matter of how flexible the admissions policies and procedures are and how responsive to individual differences among applicants. The survey produced substantial testimony on exceptions to the general rules, including higher and lower standards for admission to certain programs and departments, waivers or some requirements for specific groups of applicants (for example, older people), and relaxation of certain standards for applicants who may not have had adequate opportunity to meet the general standards. If grading systems, admissions tests, and other measures of academic qualifications are now quite standardized, the uses of such measures of exception are varied and flexible, according to the survey respondents.

Finally, one might observe that virtually all institutions in the survey are facing the imminent decline in the population of high school graduates with planful and optimistic efforts to maintain their own viability by recruiting adequate numbers of students, not just from the cohorts of new high school graduates but also from older persons, minorities, and other groups for whom increased rates of college attendance seem attainable. Enrollment projections, market analyses, institutional self-studies, and planned recruitment activities are almost universal, and the expectation of surviving current population dips and economic slumps seems unanimous. It is difficult to find in the survey data any evidence that the respondents' confidence and determination are unrealistic.

Table 56 is a summary of college admissions policies and practices as determined by the survey.

TABLE 56. Summary Table: Typical (Modal) College Policies and Practices in Admission of Freshmen, by Institutional Level and Control

Policies and Practices	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
General admissions practices	Majority of individuals who meet some specified level of academic achievement or other qualification above and beyond high school graduation are admitted (56%)	Any high school graduate (or person with equivalent credentials) is admitted (89%)	Majority of individuals who meet some specified level of academic achievement or other qualification above and beyond high school graduation are admitted (60%)	Majority of individuals who meet some specified level of academic achievement or other qualification above and beyond high school graduation are admitted (70%)	Majority of individuals who meet some specified level of academic achievement or other qualification above and beyond high school graduation are admitted (77%)
Primary responsibility for broad guidelines	Chief executive officer (40%)	Chief executive officer (41%)	Chief executive officer (48%)	Board of trustees (42%)	Admissions committee (53%)
Primary responsibility for specific policies	Admissions staff (48%)	Admissions staff (40%)	Admissions committee (52%)	Admissions staff (48%)	Admissions staff (52%)
Authority of admissions director and other institutional officers to interpret guidelines and policies flexibly in individual cases	Some flexibility within prescribed guidelines or requirements (55%)	Some flexibility within prescribed guidelines or requirements (51%)	Some flexibility within prescribed guidelines or requirements (63%)	Some flexibility within prescribed guidelines or requirements (55%)	Some flexibility within prescribed guidelines or requirements (57%)
Participation by enrolled students in admissions process	Serve on admissions policy committee (29%)	Serve on admissions policy committee (14%)	Interview prospective students (22%)	Serve on admissions policy committee (33%)	Serve on admissions policy committee (39%)
Requirement about admission of high school graduates from the same state or district	No requirement (74%)	Must accept every graduate (53%)	No requirement (90%)	No requirement (63%)	No requirement (96%)
Limit on percentage of freshmen from out of state or district	No limit or no response (93%)	No limit or no response (95%)	No limit or no response (100%)	No limit or no response (76%)	No limit or no response (99%)

Note: All percentages in this table are based on the total groups of survey respondents: 1,463 in all; 401 two-year public; 81 two-year private; 333 four-year public; and 648 four-year private.

TABLE 56. *(Continued)*

Policies and Practices	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Average required years of high school study in various subjects (percentage of colleges publishing requirement):					
English	3.7 (53%)	3.7 (16%)	3.8 (65%)	3.7 (56%)	3.8 (72%)
Mathematics	2.2 (49%)	1.9 (13%)	2.0 (53%)	2.1 (51%)	2.3 (70%)
Physical sciences	1.3 (36%)	1.3 (10%)	1.1 (35%)	1.2 (36%)	1.3 (51%)
Biological sciences	1.2 (40%)	1.3 (10%)	1.1 (46%)	1.1 (41%)	1.2 (57%)
Social studies	2.1 (44%)	2.3 (12%)	2.1 (53%)	2.0 (45%)	2.1 (63%)
Foreign languages	2.1 (21%)	2.5 (2%)	1.8 (11%)	2.0 (15%)	2.1 (38%)
Significance of published statements of required high school subjects	Recommendations to enhance students' success (32%)	Does not publish statement of required high school subjects (58%)	Does not publish statement of required high school subjects (32%)	Recommendations to enhance students' success (34%)	Recommendations to enhance students' success (40%)
Average minimum academic standards (percentage of colleges reporting minimum standard):					
High school grade average	2.0 (40%)	1.9 (6%)	1.9 (46%)	2.0 (43%)	2.0 (58%)
High school class rank (percentile)	43 (29%)	39 (2%)	42 (23%)	40 (33%)	44 (44%)
SAT (V + M scores)	740 (30%)	650 (4%)	617 (22%)	740 (39%)	754 (42%)
ACT composite score	16.2 (24%)	15.5 (2%)	14.8 (21%)	16.2 (30%)	16.4 (36%)
Uses of admissions test scores	Reviewed in practically all cases for indications of possible difficulty (63%)	Not required and not regularly used (52%)	Reviewed in practically all cases for indications of possible difficulty (64%)	Reviewed in practically all cases for indications of possible difficulty (67%)	Routinely considered in reaching overall judgment regarding admission (78%)
Conduct and recency of validity study	Have not conducted study (57%)	Have not conducted study (79%)	Have not conducted study (69%)	Conducted study in 1977 or later (44%)	Have not conducted study (51%)
Uses of predicted grade point average or similar index	No such computation is made (65%)	No such computation is made (85%)	No such computation is made (63%)	No such computation is made (53%)	No such computation is made (60%)

TABLE 56. (*Continued*)

Policies and Practices	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Personal qualities often important in admissions decisions	Motivation or initiative (32%)	Motivation or initiative (5%) Work experience related to intended field of study (5%)	Good citizenship or moral character (37%)	Motivation or initiative (21%)	Motivation or initiative (54%)
Personal qualities often or sometimes important in admissions decisions	Motivation or initiative (62%)	Motivation or initiative (19%) Work experience related to intended field of study (19%)	Good citizenship or moral character (79%)	Motivation or initiative (57%)	Motivation or initiative (90%)
Applicant characteristics and credentials considered single most important factor in admissions decisions	Academic performance in high school (31%)	Academic performance in high school (10%)	Academic performance in high school (19%)	Academic performance in high school (43%)	Academic performance in high school (39%)
Applicant characteristics and credentials considered single most important factor or very important factor in admissions decisions	Academic performance in high school (65%)	Academic performance in high school (21%)	Academic performance in high school (77%)	Academic performance in high school (77%)	Academic performance in high school (84%)
Importance of various factors in admissions:					
Academic performance in high school	Very important factor (34%)	Not considered (56%)	Very important factor (58%)	Single most important factor (43%)	Very important factor (46%)
Aptitude test scores	Very important factor (42%)	Not considered (61%)	Very important factor (36%) One of several factors (36%)	Very important factor (59%)	Very important factor (54%)
Achievement test scores	Not considered (49%)	Not considered (74%)	Not considered (46%)	Not considered (52%)	Not considered (33%)
Recommendation from high school	One of several factors (35%)	Not considered (69%)	One of several factors (44%)	Minor factor (33%)	One of several factors (51%)

TABLE 56. *(Continued)*

Policies and Practices	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Importance of various factors in admissions: *(Continued)*					
Recommendations from church, employer, community agency, etc.	Not considered (36%)	Not considered (73%)	Minor factor (31%)	Not considered (45%)	Minor factor (42%)
Interviews	One of several factors (34%)	Not considered (66%)	One of several factors (37%)	Not considered (39%)	One of several factors (49%)
Personal essay or autobiographical statement	Not considered (51%)	Not considered (80%)	Not considered (54%)	Not considered (57%)	One of several factors (33%)
Health statement	Not considered (62%)	Not considered (65%)	Not considered (33%)	Not considered (72%)	Not considered (58%)
Geographical location of applicant's residence	Not considered (72%)	Not considered (69%)	Not considered (79%)	Not considered (66%)	Not considered (76%)
Portfolios, statements, or auditions to document prior work or other notable accomplishments	Not considered (51%)	Not considered (78%)	Not considered (53%)	Not considered (48%)	Not considered (35%)
Pattern of high school subjects completed	One of several factors (31%)	Not considered (67%)	One of several factors (48%)	One of several factors (29%) Not considered (29%)	One of several factors (42%)
Applicant's declaration of major	Not considered (54%)	Not considered (68%)	Not considered (51%)	Not considered (50%)	Not considered (48%)
Applicant's ability or inability to pay costs of attendance	Not considered (76%)	Not considered (72%)	Not considered (60%)	Not considered (87%)	Not considered (74%)
Credentials required of all applicants	Complete high school transcript (74%)	Evidence of high school graduation or equivalent (48%)	Complete high school transcript (85%)	Evidence of high school graduation or equivalent (80%)	Complete high school transcript (88%)

TABLE 56. *(Continued)*

Policies and Practices	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Credentials required of all or some applicants	Complete high school transcript (91%)	Complete high school transcript (81%) Evidence of high school graduation or equivalent (81%)	Complete high school transcript (93%) Evidence of high school graduation or equivalent (93%)	Complete high school transcript (95%) Evidence of high school graduations or equivalent (95%)	Complete high school transcript (95%)
Number of semesters of high school (grades 9-12) that must be completed for institution to make initial admission decision	Six semesters (52%)	Not applicable or no response (62%)	Six semesters (53%)	Six semesters (62%)	Six semesters (66%)
Use of student-reported high school grades	Not used (78%)	Not used (65%)	Not used (85%)	Not used (78%)	Not used (85%)
Preferred basis for computation of high school class rank	No preference or no response (36%)	No preference or no response (74%)	All subjects completed (31%)	No preference or no response (31%)	Academic subjects only, with extra weight given to honors and advanced placement courses (33%)
Preferred basis for computation of high school grade average	No preference or no response (36%)	No preference or no response (70%)	All subjects completed (27%)	No preference or no response (31%)	Academic subjects only, with extra weight given to honors and advanced placement courses (31%)
Method of selection for admission among qualified applicants	All who meet minimum standards can be accommodated (56%)	All who meet minimum standards can be accommodated (64%)	All who meet minimum standards can be accommodated (51%)	All who meet minimum standards can be accommodated (60%)	All who meet minimum standards can be accommodated (48%)
Method of selection by institutions that cannot accommodate all applicants who meet minimum standards (percentages based on all institutions in total group and categories)	All who meet minimum standards accepted as applications are received until all places have been filled (26%)	All who meet minimum standards are accepted as applications are received until all places have been filled (25%)	All who meet minimum standards are accepted as applications are received until all places have been filled (37%)	All who meet minimum standards are accepted as applications are received until all places have been filled (19%)	All who meet minimum standards are accepted as applications are received until all places have been filled (28%)

TABLE 56. *(Continued)*

Policies and Practices	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Appeals procedures for rejected applicants	Do not have formal procedure but review individual decisions on request (41%)	Do not have appeals procedure (39%)	Do not have formal procedure but review individual decisions on request (49%)	Do not have formal procedure but review individual decisions on request (36%)	Do not have formal procedure but review individual decisions on request (55%)
Institutions reporting applicants to programs or departments that are more selective than general admissions practices of their institutions	538 (37%)	240 (60%)	22 (27%)	152 (46%)	124 (19%)
Institutions reporting applicants to programs or departments that are less selective than general admissions practices of their institutions	193 (13%)	72 (18%)	9 (11%)	53 (16%)	59 (9%)
Groups to which institutions may offer admission even though academic credentials may be lower than those of other applicants	Racial or ethnic minorities (37%) Disadvantaged students (37%)	Senior citizens (22%)	Senior citizens (32%)	Disadvantaged students (49%)	Racial or ethnic minorities (41%)
Institutions reporting exceptions to formal admissions requirements for:					
Athletes	329 (22%)	34 (8%)	12 (15%)	129 (39%)	154 (24%)
Alumni relatives	338 (23%)	33 (8%)	20 (25%)	77 (23%)	208 (32%)
Faculty relatives	363 (25%)	35 (9%)	20 (25%)	83 (25%)	225 (35%)

TABLE 56. (*Continued*)

Policies and Practices	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Institutions reporting exceptions to formal admissions requirements for: (*Continued*)					
Racial or ethnic minorities	480 (33%)	56 (14%)	21 (26%)	149 (45%)	254 (39%)
Disadvantaged students	477 (33%)	68 (17%)	17 (21%)	155 (47%)	237 (37%)
Physically handicapped persons	386 (26%)	63 (16%)	19 (23%)	121 (36%)	183 (28%)
Students with special talents in such areas as art or music	369 (25%)	39 (10%)	15 (19%)	129 (39%)	186 (29%)
Adult students	560 (38%)	78 (19%)	33 (41%)	170 (51%)	279 (43%)
Admission of entering freshmen at end of junior year of high school	Admitted and permitted to take some college-level credits before completing senior year of high school (45%)	Admitted and permitted to take some college-level credits before completing senior year of high school (62%)	Admitted and permitted to take some college-level credits before completing senior year of high school (35%)	Admitted and permitted to take some college-level credits before completing senior year of high school (58%)	Admitted and enrolled as regular students and permitted to take full program of college work without completing senior year of high school (49%)
Waiver of requirement of high school graduation for older applicants	No waiver (75%)	No waiver (53%)	No waiver (91%)	No waiver (82%)	No waiver (83%)
Waiver of high school subject requirements for older applicants	No waiver (50%)	Not required (51%)	No waiver (54%)	No waiver (48%)	No waiver (56%)
Waiver of minimum school grade average or class rank for older applicants	No waiver (47%)	Not required (58%)	No waiver (52%)	No waiver (54%)	No waiver (50%)
Waiver of admissions test requirement for older applicants	No waiver (52%)	No waiver (46%)	No waiver (54%)	No waiver (59%)	No waiver (53%)

TABLE 56. *(Continued)*

Policies and Practices	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Recruiting procedures used very frequently	Participation in college nights, fairs, other sessions with other colleges (64%) Direct mailings to prospective students (64%)	Advertisements in local newspapers (53%)	Direct mailings to prospective students (70%)	Participation in college nights, fairs, other group sessions with other colleges (77%)	Direct mailings to prospective students (75%)
College representatives used very frequently to visit high schools for recruiting	Admissions or high school relations staff (78%)	Admissions or high school relations staff (67%)	Admissions or high school relations staff (80%)	Admissions or high school relations staff (84%)	Admissions or high school relations staff (82%)
Mailing services and lists purchased by colleges for communicating with prospective students	College Board's Student Search Service (44%)	Other (19%)	College Board's Student Search Service (46%)	National Merit Scholarship Program and National Achievement Scholarship Program lists (54%)	College Board's Student Search Service (68%)
Directing of special recruiting activities toward certain groups	Academically talented (67%)	Adult students (54%)	Academically talented (54%)	Academically talented (84%)	Academically talented (80%)
Use of no-need scholarships and modified financial aid packages to induce enrollment of accepted applicants from certain groups	Academically talented (61%)	Academically talented (36%)	Academically talented (54%)	Academically talented (72%)	Academically talented (71%)
Payment of financial incentives to enrolled students and individuals not employed by institutions, for recruitment of new students	No (95%)	No (94%)	No (90%)	No (97%)	No (94%)

TABLE 56. *(Continued)*

Policies and Practices	All Institutions	Two-year Public	Two-year Private	Four-year Public	Four-year Private
Basis for granting advanced standing, credit, exemption, and placement in 1978	Nationally administered examinations such as College Board's Advanced Placement Program and College-Level Examination Program (64%)	Nationally administered examinations such as College Board's Advanced Placement Program and College-Level Examination Program (51%)	Nationally administered examinations such as College Board's Advanced Placement Program and College-Level Examination Program (44%)	Nationally administered examinations such as College Board's Advanced Placement Program and College-Level Examination Program (73%)	Nationally administered examinations such as College Board's Advanced Placement Program and College-Level Examination Program (69%)

Appendix: Survey Questionnaire

Survey of Undergraduate Admissions Poiicies, Practices, and Procedures

Instructions

This Survey of Undergraduate Admissions Policies, Practices, and Procedures is being conducted jointly by the College Board and American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). It should be completed by the director of admissions or other official responsible for admissions policy and decision making at your institution. We hope that you will be able to complete the questionnaire and return it to the College Board, 888 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019 by February 15, 1979. For your convenience a postage-paid return envelope is enclosed.

Most of the questions inquire about things that should be easily answerable on the basis of your experience and general knowledge about activities at your institution. Some of the questions ask that you provide actual numbers or percentages. It may be necessary for you to estimate some of these. If you estimate, please do so with as much precision as possible. Please answer every question. Some of the questions may require that you get information maintained in other offices. We hope you will take the initiative to involve those offices in completing the questionnaire. Specific terminology in this document has been left undefined purposely and should be interpreted by you in the way your institution uses it.

Except where otherwise indicated, you should provide information about your institution's policies, practices, and procedures as they generally apply to first-time undergraduate candidates who have been educated in the American secondary school tradition. American citizens or foreigners who have been educated in American schools overseas should be included, as should foreign students who attended schools in this country. Students transferring from other postsecondary institutions should generally be excluded. Unless otherwise indicated, public institutions should describe their policies, practices, and procedures as they apply to in-state or in-district candidates. We realize that these limitations may exclude important segments of your student body, but we believe that their inclusion would have made this questionnaire too long.

Please supply your name and address and College Board identification number at the end of the questionnaire. (Your institution's identification number is printed on your mailing label.) This information is *solely* for purposes of follow-up for incomplete or missing responses. In any materials derived from this study *no institution will be identified in any way. Your responses will be strictly confidential.* The completed questionnaires will be destroyed immediately after they have been keypunched. The computer files developed from the data you provide *will not* contain individual institutional identification. Only summary responses by institutional type, region, etc., will be produced, and no specific information from this survey about institutions or states will be released to anyone.

A preliminary report of the findings from this study will be presented at the AACRAO annual meeting in Chicago in April. A copy of this report will be sent to you at the address you give at the end of the questionnaire. The information in this survey will provide an important source of data about the postsecondary admissions process. It will provide a benchmark against which you and your colleagues can measure and describe changes that occur. Your cooperation and support are important, and we are extremely grateful for your assistance in this endeavor.

Advisory Committee:

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Elizabeth G. Vermey
Bryn Mawr College

Representing AACRAO:

Albert L. Clary, President

Howard B. Shontz, Vice President, Admissions and Financial Aid

J. Douglas Conner, Executive Secretary

1. Which of the following statements best describes the *general admissions practices* of your institution (i.e. those which would be true of most of those who apply)? Enter the number of the statement you select in the code box.

1. *Any individual* wishing to attend will be admitted without review of conventional academic qualifications such as high school graduation, aptitude or achievement tests, etc.
2. *Any high school graduate* (or person with equivalent credentials) will be admitted.
3. The *majority of individuals* who meet some specified level of academic achievement or other qualifications above and beyond high school graduation are admitted.
4. Among those individuals who meet some specified level of academic achievement or other qualifications above and beyond high school graduation, *only a limited number* will be admitted.

2. Institutions may have individual programs or departments that are more or less selective than the general admissions practices of the institution. Please enter the number of applicants at your institution who applied to programs that are: (leave blank if all programs are equally selective)

a. More selective than others

b. Less selective than others

3. The following questions refer to the fall term 1978.

a. How many *full-time undergraduate* students did your institution enroll?

b. What was the full-time and part-time *undergraduate enrollment* at your institution?

c. How many students *applied for admission* (i.e. submitted complete applications) to your institution as first-time freshmen?

d. Of the students in 3c, how many were *accepted for admission* to your institution?

e. Of the students in 3d, how many *actually enrolled* at your institution?

4. What do you think the enrollment will be at your institution in the mid-1980s compared to today?

1. Enrollment will be greater than 1978 by more than 5 percent
2. Enrollment will be about the same (plus or minus 5 percent) as in 1978
3. Enrollment will be lower than 1978 by more than 5 percent

5. What was the approximate *mean high school grade-point average or mean percentile rank in class* of the students accepted for admission as freshmen at your institution for the fall term, 1978?

Mean grade-point average

or

Mean rank in class

6. Some of the following groups of students may be offered admission to your institution even though their grade-point average, rank in class, or test scores may be significantly lower than those of other applicants. Enter "1" in the box for those groups who *may* be offered admission; otherwise enter "0."

Athletes

Alumni relatives

Faculty relatives

Members of racial/ethnic minority groups

Disadvantaged students, as distinct from members of racial/ethnic minority groups

Physically handicapped persons

Students with special talents in such areas as art or music

Senior citizens

7. How many of the entering freshmen at your institution in the fall of 1978 were granted advanced standing, credit, exemption, or placement on the basis of:

a. Scores on nationally administered examinations like the College Board's Advanced Placement Program or College-Level Examination Program?

b. Locally developed or administered examinations?

c. Evaluation of portfolios documenting prior work and/or accomplishments?

d. College level work taken while in high school?

e. Military courses or experience?

8. How many of the entering freshmen at your institution in the fall of 1978 were high school students who were:

a. Admitted and enrolled as regular students at the end of their junior year and were permitted to take a full course of college level credits, rather than complete the senior year at their school?

b. Admitted at the end of their junior year and were permitted to take some college level credits before completing their senior year of high school?

c. Admitted at the end of their junior year but were not permitted to register for college credits until they had been graduated?

9. How many of the entering freshmen at your institution in the fall of 1978 were admitted with the understanding that they would *enroll primarily for remedial courses* in their first semester or first year?

10. How would you describe the percentage of entering freshmen in 1970 who were admitted with the understanding that they would enroll in remedial course work? How do you think today's percentage will compare with that in the mid-1980s? Enter the number of the response option below in the code boxes.

1. Higher than in 1978
2. About the same as in 1978
3. Lower than in 1978
4. Does not apply

In 1970, the percentage was:	*In the mid-1980s the percentage will be:*

11. How would you describe the selection standards at your institution in 1970 compared with today's standards? How do you think today's will compare with those of the mid-1980s? For each statement, enter the number of the response option of your choice in the code box.

1. Higher than in 1978
2. About the same as in 1978
3. Lower than in 1978
4. Does not apply

	In 1970, the standards were:	*In the mid-1980s the standards are estimated to be:*
a. The general level of selectivity of the institution	☐	☐
b. The pattern of high school coursework	☐	☐
c. The high school grade-point average or rank in class	☐	☐
d. The level of scores expected on standardized admissions tests	☐	☐

12. Select the statement that best describes the role actually played by the following individuals or groups in determining or setting the broad guidelines and/or the specific admissions policies that apply to entering freshmen at your institution. Enter the number of the appropriate statement for each group in the code box.

1. Primary responsibility for broad guidelines
2. Primary responsibility for specific policies
3. Primary responsibility for both guidelines and specific policies
4. Strong influence on guidelines and policies, but no direct responsibility
5. Advisory role only
6. No involvement

☐ a. Admissions committee
☐ b. Admissions office staff
☐ c. Chief executive officers
☐ d. Executive council, council of deans, or similar administrative group
☐ e. Faculty senate
☐ f. Individual departments
☐ g. Institutional board of trustees or other governing board
☐ h. Students
☐ i. State legislature
☐ j. State coordinating board or "1202" commission

13. How would you describe the role actually played by each of the following individuals or groups in determining or setting the broad guidelines and/or specific admissions policies that apply to entering freshmen at your institution in 1970 as compared with today? How do you think they will compare in the mid-1980s? For each individual or group, enter the number of the response option of your choice in the code boxes.

1. More important than in 1978
2. About the same as in 1978
3. Less important than in 1978
4. Does not apply

	In 1970 their role was:	*In the mid-1980s their role is estimated to be:*
a. Admissions committee	☐	☐
b. Admissions office staff	☐	☐
c. Chief executive officers	☐	☐
d. Executive council, council of deans, or similar administrative group	☐	☐
e. Faculty senate	☐	☐
f. Individual departments, schools, or colleges within the institution	☐	☐
g. Institutional board of trustees or other governing board	☐	☐
h. Students	☐	☐
i. State legislature	☐	☐
j. State coordinating board or "1202" commission	☐	☐

☐ **14.** Which one of the following statements best describes the authority of the director of admissions to make a decision on an individual student's case having all the facts and data available?

1. Complete flexibility
2. Some flexibility within prescribed guidelines or requirements
3. Only minimal flexibility within prescribed guidelines or requirements
4. No flexibility within prescribed guidelines or requirements, but other institutional offices or officers can make exceptions
5. The director and other institutional offices or officers must adhere rigidly to the prescribed guidelines or requirements

15. How many freshmen could have been admitted to your institution in the fall of 1978 as exceptions to the formal requirements for admission? Enter "00" if no exceptions were made.

☐☐☐☐

16. How does the number of exceptions reported in the previous question compare with those exceptions that could have been made in 1970? How do you think the number will compare with the mid-1980s?

1. Noticeably higher than in 1978
2. About the same as in 1978
3. Noticeably lower than in 1978
4. No exceptions are made

☐ In 1970 the number of exceptions could have been:

☐ In the mid-1980s the number is estimated to be:

17. If exceptions to the formal requirements for admission are granted, which of the following groups would be eligible? Enter "1" for those who would be eligible, and "0" for those ineligible.

Estimate the percent that each group represents of the total number of exceptions that could have been granted for the fall of 1978.

How did that percent compare with those exceptions granted in 1970? How will it compare with the 1980s? Enter "1" for "noticeably higher than in 1978;" "2" for "about the same as in 1978;" "3" for "noticeably higher than in 1978;" "4" for "no exceptions are made."

			Percentage today	*1970 was:*	*Mid-1980 will be:*
a.	Athletes	☐	☐☐	☐	☐
b.	Alumni relatives	☐	☐☐	☐	☐
c.	Faculty relatives	☐	☐☐	☐	☐
d.	Members of racial/ethnic minority groups	☐	☐☐	☐	☐
e.	Disadvantaged students as distinct from members of racial/ethnic minority groups	☐	☐☐	☐	☐
f.	Physically handicapped	☐	☐☐	☐	☐
g.	Students with special talents in such areas as art and music	☐	☐☐	☐	☐
h.	Adult students	☐	☐☐	☐	☐

18. Is there a specific age or length of time after graduation from high school when your institution will waive one or more of the following credentials for entering freshmen? If your institution will not waive the requirement, enter "00." If the item is typically not required, enter "99."

We will waive the following credentials for:	*for applicants who are older than (enter age)*	*for applicants who have been out of school for (enter number of years)*
a. High school graduation or equivalent	☐☐	☐☐
b. Particular high school coursework requirements	☐☐	☐☐
c. Minimum high school grade-point average or rank in class	☐☐	☐☐
d. Admissions tests	☐☐	☐☐

19. Is there a limit, either imposed by a governing board or self-imposed, on the percentage of the freshman class at your institution who can be out-of-state or out-of-district students? Enter the percentage in the code box. If there is no limit, place "00" in the code box.

☐☐

20. How does the percentage of out-of-state or out-of-district students in the entering class for the fall of 1978 compare with the percentage of those who entered in the fall of 1970? How do you think the percentage for 1978 will compare with that for the mid-1980s?

1. Higher than in 1978
2. About the same in 1978
3. Lower than in 1978

☐ In 1970, the percentage was

☐ In the mid-1980s the percentage is estimated to be

☐ **21.** Is your institution required, by policy or law, to accept all or some specified portion of the graduates of accredited high schools in your state or district?

1. No
2. We must accept every graduate
3. We must accept graduates with an average of 2.00 ("C") or better
4. We must accept graduates with some specified level of achievement higher than 2.0
5. We must accept a specific percentage of the high school graduating class (for example, all students in the upper-half of their graduating class).

22. The following list includes different kinds of credentials that institutions may ask or require applicants to submit in documentation of their fulfillment of admissions requirements and/or to enhance the possibility of their selection. For each item please indicate whether the credential is required or recommended for all or some of your applicants.

1. For all applicants
2. For some applicants
3. Does not apply for any applicants

	Required	*Recommended*
a. Complete high school transcript	☐	☐
b. Evidence of high school graduation or GED	☐	☐
c. Admissions test scores such as ACT or SAT	☐	☐
d. Achievement test scores such as the College Board's APP, CLEP, and Achievement Tests	☐	☐
e. Letters of recommendation	☐	☐
f. Interviews with the admissions staff, faculty, alumni, etc.	☐	☐
g. Personal essay or autobiographical statement	☐	☐
h. Health statement	☐	☐
i. Portfolios, statements, or auditions to document or demonstrate prior work or other notable accomplishments	☐	☐

23. Are the high school course requirements published in your catalog *rigid requirements* (i.e. a student who has not completed the prescribed pattern will not be admitted), or are they *recommended sequences* intended to enhance the student's success at the institution?

1. The published statements are rigid requirements
2. The published statements are generally considered rigid requirements although they are waived in a limited number of cases
3. The published statements are recommendations to enhance the student's success at the institution
4. We do not have published statements of course requirements

24.

For students admitted for fall 1978, how many years of high school study (grades 9-12) did your institution require in each of the following subject areas? Enter the number of years in the code box. If you had no requirements, enter "0."	How many years of high school study did you require of students who entered in fall 1970?	How many years of high school study do you anticipate will be required of students in the mid-1980s?
a. English		
b. Mathematics		
c. Physical sciences		
d. Biological sciences		
e. Social studies		
f. Foreign languages		

25. How many semesters of high school (grades 9-12) must be completed in order for your institution to make an initial admissions decision about a typical applicant?

1. Five semesters
2. Six semesters
3. Seven semesters
4. Eight semesters
5. This does not apply to our institution

26. Does your institution typically require the submission of an eighth semester high school transcript in order to confirm admission?

1. Yes
2. No
3. We require the eighth semester transcript before any decision is typically made
4. We do not typically require the submission of any high school transcript

27. What percent of the high school transcripts or grade reports that you receive contain a grade-point average and/or rank in class?

1. Substantially all
2. More than 75%
3. 51% to 75%
4. 26% to 50%
5. 25% or fewer
6. We do not typically receive or review high school transcripts or grade reports

☐ Grade-point average
☐ Rank in class

28. Does your institution use self-reported high school grades in the admissions process?

1. Yes, we make a preliminary decision on the basis of self-reported grades, but an official transcript is required
2. Yes, we rely on self-reported grades in most cases, and typically do not require an official transcript
3. No
4. No, we do not typically require or review high school grades

29. If the high school transcript or grade report includes a calculation of the student's grade-point average, do you accept that calculation for admissions purposes or do you recalculate the average?

1. Yes, we will accept the high school's computed grade-point average
2. No, we recalculate to verify mathematical accuracy only
3. No, we recalculate to give weight to or exclude certain courses
4. No, we do not typically require or review the high school grade-point average

30. What is your preference for a method by which secondary schools compute rank in class or grade-point average?

1. None
2. Based on all courses completed
3. Based on academic courses only
4. Based on all courses with extra weight given to honors or advanced placement courses
5. Based on academic courses only with extra weight given to honors or advanced placement courses
6. We do not typically require or review the high school rank in class or grade-point average

	Rank	*Grade-point average*
	☐	☐

31. Decisions as to which students are admitted to postsecondary educational institutions may be made on the basis of a complex interaction between a variety of candidate characteristics. How important would you say the following factors were in your decision-making process for the typical entering freshman candidate?

1. The *single* most important factor
2. A very important factor
3. One of several factors
4. A minor factor
5. We do not consider this

☐ a. High school academic performance (G.P.A.or rank in class)
☐ b. Aptitude test scores such as the SAT, ACT, or PSAT
☐ c. Achievement test scores such as the College Board's APP, Achievement Tests, etc.
☐ d. Letters of recommendation from the high school
☐ e. Letters of recommendation from church, employer, community agency, etc.
☐ f. Interviews with faculty members, alumni, admissions office staff, current students, etc.
☐ g. Personal essay or autobiographical statement

- ☐ h. Health statement
- ☐ i. Geographical location of candidate's place of residence
- ☐ j. Portfolios, statements, or auditions to document or demonstrate prior work or other notable accomplishments
- ☐ k. Pattern of high school coursework
- ☐ l. Declaration of major
- ☐ m. Ability to pay the cost of attendance or need for financial assistance

32. What changes have occurred in the importance your institution places on different kinds of credentials since 1970? What changes do you think will take place by the mid-1980s?

1. More important than in 1978
2. About the same as in 1978
3. Less important than in 1978
4. We do not consider this

	In 1970 this was:	*In mid-1980 this is estimated to be:*
a. High school academic performance (grade-point average or rank in class)	☐	☐
b. Aptitude test scores such as the SAT, ACT, or PSAT	☐	☐
c. Achievement test scores such as the College Board's APP, Achievement Tests, etc.	☐	☐
d. Letters of recommendation from the high school	☐	☐
e. Letters of recommendation from church, employer, community agency, etc.	☐	☐
f. Interviews with faculty members, alumni, admissions office staff, current students, etc.	☐	☐
g. Personal essay or autobiographical statement	☐	☐
h. Health statement	☐	☐
i. Geographical location of candidate's place of residence	☐	☐
j. Portfolios, statements, or auditions to document or demonstrate prior work or other notable accomplishments	☐	☐
k. Pattern of high school coursework	☐	☐
l. Declaration of major	☐	☐
m. Ability to pay the cost of attendance or need for financial assistance	☐	☐

☐ **33.** If you cannot accommodate all the freshman applicants who meet the minimum standards for admission to your institution, how do you determine whom to accept?

1. All applicants who meet the required minimum standards are accepted as their applications are received on a first-come, first-served basis until all available places have been filled
2. Individual evaluation of each candidate to establish a rank-order, with admission offered in that order until all available spaces have been filled
3. Random selection from among all the qualified candidates until all available spaces have been filled
4. We can accommodate all of the students who meet our minimum standards for admission

34. What role do subjective judgments of the following personal qualities play in the decision to admit freshmen at your institution?

1. Not an important factor
2. Sometimes an important factor
3. Often an important factor

- ☐ a. Leadership capabilities
- ☐ b. Community or church involvement
- ☐ c. Motivation or initiative
- ☐ d. Work experience related to intended field of study
- ☐ e. Compatibility between institutional qualities and individual student needs (i.e. independent study, study abroad, creative expression)
- ☐ f. Evidence of good citizenship or moral character
- ☐ g. Special skills or abilities

35. Does your institution have minimum standards below which an applicant is generally not considered eligible for admission as a freshman? If "yes," enter the minimum standard. If "no," enter "0's" in the code boxes.

	Minimum standard
a. High school grade-point average	☐ ☐☐
b. High school rank in class (in percentile)	☐☐
c. SAT (Verbal plus Mathematical)	☐☐☐☐
d. ACT (Composite)	☐☐

36. How would you describe the use of admissions test scores at your institution? Enter "1" for *all* statements that are correct. Enter "0" for those which are not correct.

- ☐ 1. We do not require the submission of admissions test scores and consequently make no regular use of them
- ☐ 2. Scores are routinely considered in reaching an overall judgment regarding admissibility for practically all freshman applicants
- ☐ 3. Scores for practically all freshman applicants are reviewed to see if there are indications that the individual may have difficulty in completing the academic program without special assistance
- ☐ 4. Scores are checked only when other application credentials fall below some specific level
- ☐ 5. Scores are used by the institution in freshman class profile descriptions and by prospective applicants as part of a self-selection process
- ☐ 6. Scores are required or recommended but seldom play any role in the admissions decision or course placement of individual students

37. Toward which of the following groups of students does your institution direct *special recruiting activities*? Place "1" in all that apply. Place "0" if the group does not receive special recruiting activities.

In the fall of 1970, your institution's recruiting activities toward this group were (use the response codes below):

In the mid-1980s, your institution's recruiting activities toward this group could be estimated as (use the response codes below):

1. Noticeably higher than in 1978
2. About the same as in 1978
3. Noticeably lower than in 1978

☐	☐	☐	Athletes
☐	☐	☐	Academically talented
☐	☐	☐	Alumni relatives

Faculty relatives

Members of racial/ethnic minority groups

Disadvantaged students, as distinct from members of racial/ethnic minority groups

Physically handicapped persons

Students with special talents in such areas as art, music, drama, debate, etc.

Adult students

Out-of-state or out-of-district students

Part-time students

Veterans

Military personnel on active duty

38. How frequently does each of the following groups make visits to high schools as part of the *recruiting* activities of your institution?

1. Very frequently
2. Occasionally
3. Infrequently
4. Never

a. Admissions office or high school relations office staff

b. Current students

c. Alumni

d. Faculty

e. Paid recruiters who are not regular institutional employees

f. Coaches, band directors, other activity advisers

g. Other (please specify)_____

39. How extensively does your institution use each of the following recruiting devices? Use the codes below to enter your response in the boxes:

1. Very frequently
2. Occasionally
3. Infrequently
4. Never

In the fall of 1970, your institution's use of each kind of recruiting device was (use the response codes below):

In the mid-1980s, your institution's use of each kind of recruiting device will be (use the response codes below):

1. Noticeably higher than in 1978
2. About the same as in 1978
3. Noticeably lower than in 1978

Invitations to visit the campus at institutional expense extended to:

Prospective students and their families

Secondary school personnel

College nights, fairs, or other group sessions with more than your own institution attending

Visits to non-institutional central locations with students and families interested only in your institution invited to attend

Direct mailings to prospective students

Telephone calls to prospective students or toll-free lines for incoming calls

Advertisements on/in:

Billboards or transit-bus/subways/etc. posters

Commercial radio or television

Educational television

Local newspapers

High school newspapers

Professional journals

Promotional films, video tape, cassettes, etc.

40. If your institution uses direct mail to communicate with prospective applicants, do you purchase services or mailing lists? Enter "1" if you use or purchase a particular service or list. Enter "0" if you do not.

a. ACT's Educational Opportunity Service

b. The College Board's Student Search Service

c. National Merit/National Achievement Program list

d. National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students (NSSFNS)

e. A commercial mailing list service

f. A list provided by a state or local agency

g. Other (please specify)_____

41. Are currently enrolled students or individuals not employed by your institution given direct or indirect financial incentives or remuneration (other than reimbursement for expenses) for recruiting activities on behalf of your institution?

1. No
2. Yes, current students are given a financial incentive to recruit other students
3. Yes, individuals not employed directly by the institution have a financial incentive
4. Yes, both current students and individuals not employed by the insitution have a financial incentive to recruit students

42. Is financial aid, either in the form of "no-need" scholarships or through modifications in packaging, used as an inducement to increase the probability of having an accepted entering freshman applicant enroll at your institution?

	"No-need" scholarships	*Modification in packaging procedures*
1. Yes		
2. No		

43. To which of the following groups are "no-need" scholarships or modified packages offered? Enter "1" if the group may receive such offers. Enter "0" if they may not.

Athletes

Members of racial/ethnic minority groups

Disadvantaged students, as distinct from members of racial/ethnic minority groups

Students with special non-academic talents (musicians, debaters, etc.)

Academically talented students

Students from different geographic locations

44. In which of the following ways do students at your institution participate in the freshman admissions process? Enter "1" for all that apply. Enter "0" for those that do not apply.

- ☐ a. Students serve on the admissions policy committee
- ☐ b. Students serve on the admissions appeal committee
- ☐ c. Students interview other prospective students
- ☐ d. Students review other prospective students' academic or personal credentials
- ☐ e. Students regularly participate in making admissions decisions

45. If your institution has conducted studies that correlate measures of past performance (i.e. high school grades, rank in class, test scores, etc.) with college achievement, graduation, and/or retention, enter the last two digits of the year in which the most recent study was completed in the response box. If no such studies have been conducted, enter "00."

☐☐

☐ **46.** Is a predicted grade-point average or similar index computed for typical freshmen applicants at your institution?

1. Yes, and a minimum value must be obtained in order to be considered for admission
2. Yes, it is one factor that is taken into account in the admission decision
3. Yes, but it is only used for guidance purposes
4. No

☐ **47.** Does your institution routinely prepare "profiles" of the entering freshman class, listing such factors as high school performance, gender, age, racial/ethnic group membership, etc.? Enter "1" for yes and "0" for no.

48. If your institution has conducted studies projecting future enrollment, enter the last two digits of the year in which the most recent study was completed in the segment boxes. If no such studies have been conducted, enter "00."

☐☐

☐ **49.** Has your institution conducted marketing studies that have included such things as market segmentation, positioning, cost-effectiveness of recruiting activities, evaluation of communications efforts, etc.?

1. Yes, we regularly conduct systematic studies in areas such as this
2. Yes, we have conducted studies but they are largely informal
3. No, we have not conducted such studies

50. Does your institution provide prospective students with the following kinds of information?

1. Yes, routinely
2. Yes, on request
3. No

- ☐ a. Detailed description of the actual basis for admission decisions
- ☐ b. Descriptions of exceptions to the standard admissions policy
- ☐ c. Profiles of the high school grade-point averages or rank in class of prior years' admitted students
- ☐ d. Profiles of the first-year achievements of admitted students
- ☐ e. Equations for use in calculating admissibility
- ☐ f. Equations for use in calculating probable first-year achievement
- ☐ g. Examples of the kinds of financial aid available to "typical" students
- ☐ h. Equations or schedules for use in calculating the probability or amount of financial aid that might be awarded
- i. Probabilities of completion or rates of retention:
  - ☐ For the institution as a whole
  - ☐ For specific types or categories of students
  - ☐ For specific programs or courses of study
- j. The employment experience, average salary, etc.:
  - ☐ For graduates of the institution as a whole
  - ☐ For specific programs or curriculums
- ☐ k. The percent of graduates who enroll in graduate or professional schools

☐ **51.** Does your institution have a formal procedure through which rejected applicants may appeal the admissions decision?

1. Yes, we have such a procedure and all rejected applicants are routinely informed of it
2. Yes, we have such a procedure but inform students of it only when they inquire specifically
3. We do not have a formal procedure, but individual decisions are reviewed by the admissions office upon request
4. No, we do not have such a procedure

Name of person filling out questionnaire

Title

Institution

Address

(City) (State) (Zip)

( ) Telephone number

College Board Identification Number 0 0 ☐☐☐☐

January 1979